MITSUKAZU MIHARA:
THE EMBALMER™
VOLUME ONE
TOKYOPOP®

THE EMBALMER™

Vol. 1

by Mitsukazu Mihara

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

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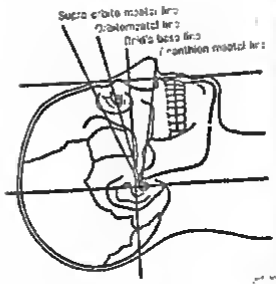
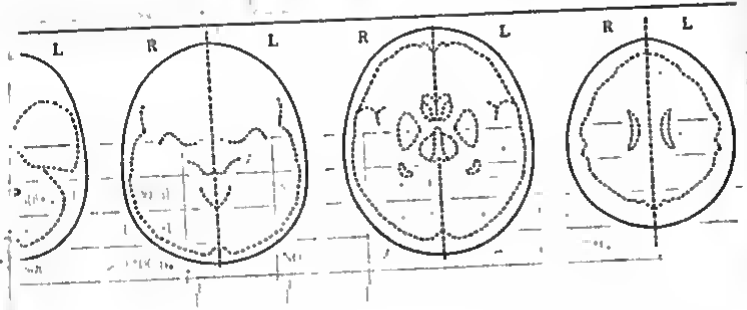




IF SHIN-JYUROU DEALT IN PRECIOUS METALS RATHER THAN DEAD PEOPLE...
ZZZ...
ZZZ...
WAKE UP!
...THEN I'D SAY HE STRUCK GOLD LAST NIGHT.
Well, gold AND a brunette..

エンバーミング [embalming]

A practice utilizing techniques such as preservation, disinfection and restoration to return a corpse to a state close to that of when it was alive.

HUH... WHA...?
SHIN-JYUROU?!
DON'T YOU HAVE SHOPPING TO DO OR SOMETHING?
I'VE GOT TO CLEAN AND YOU'RE IN THE WAY. NOW GO!
SHIN-JYUROU, BEING YOUR LANDLORD DOESN'T ALSO MAKE ME YOUR HOUSEKEEPER, YOU KNOW.
WHY DOES GRANDPA EVEN RENT HIS CHURCH TO A SLOB LIKE YOU?
AZUKI...
YOU LOOK LIKE A PENGUIN.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
I'M NOTHING LIKE—
PENGUINS ARE CUTE.
I'M HUNGRY.
MAKE ME SOMETHING?
HEY! YOU CAN JUST...
AS IF. HE'S NOT FOOLING ME THIS TIME!

HE'S SO SERIOUS ABOUT HIS WORK, IT'S ALMOST PAINFUL.
ESPECIALLY SINCE HE'S NEVER SERIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE!
HEY, DID YOU KNOW THAT IN THE ARCTIC THEY BURN PENGUINS FOR HEAT IF THEY RUN OUT OF COAL?
SHINJYUROU...
NOPE.
IT'S A SACRED PLACE.
YES, MA'AM!
...DO THE WASHING UP, AFTER YOU EAT.
HEY...
DO YOU WANT ME TO CLEAN YOUR WORK-ROOM, TOO?
I'VE NEVER BEEN IN THERE. NOT ONCE!
HMM... THAT REMINDS ME...

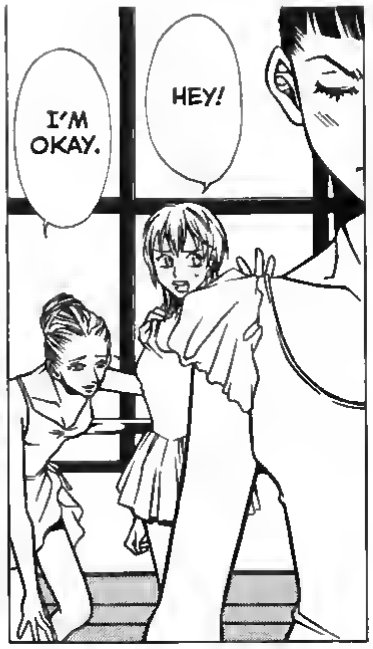
IDIOT.

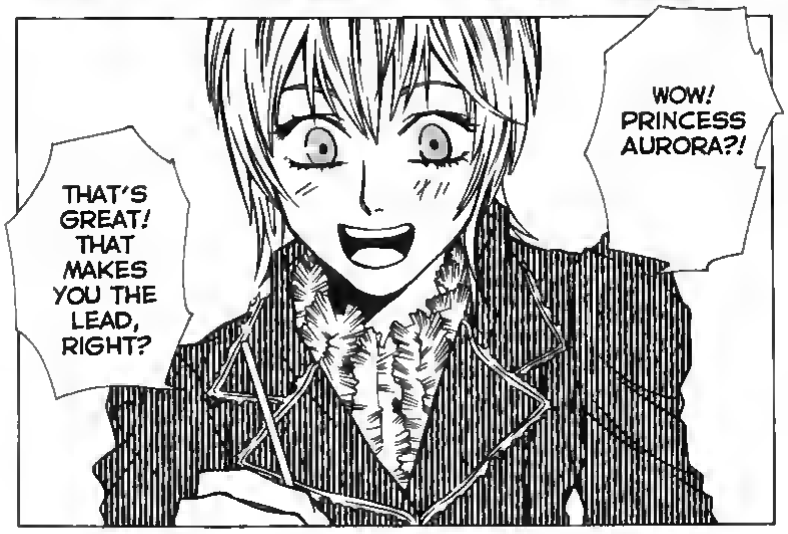
They say it looks as if they are only sleeping.

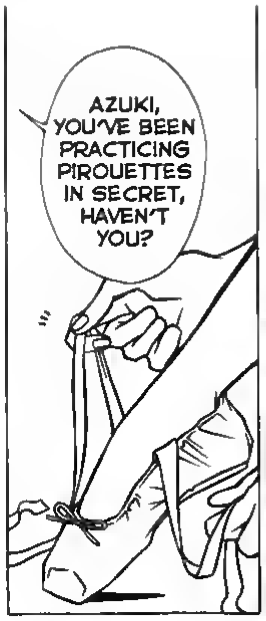
Embalming orginated in ancient Egypt, then spread with the Christian Church. A combination of artistic and scientific techniques are used to restore the corpse to an appearance close to that of when it was alive.

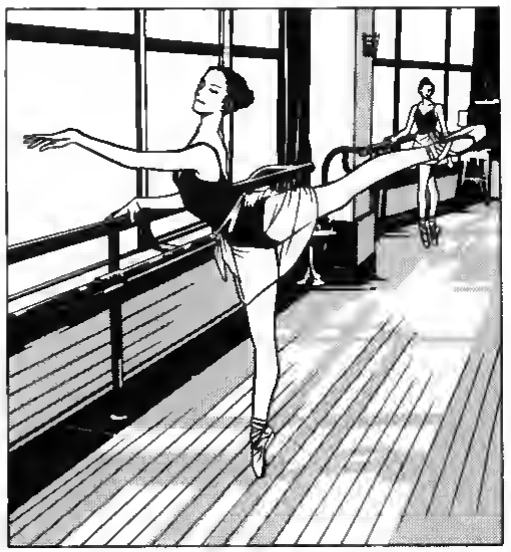
Shinjyurou Mamiya is an embalmer—a rarity in Japan.

IN AMERICA, IT'S A VERY RESPECTED PROFESSION, BUT...

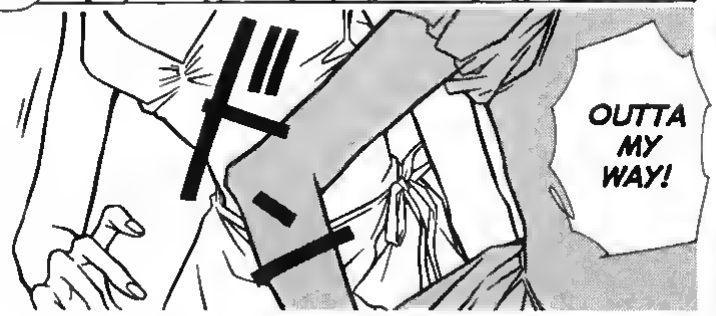

I'M OKAY.
HEY!

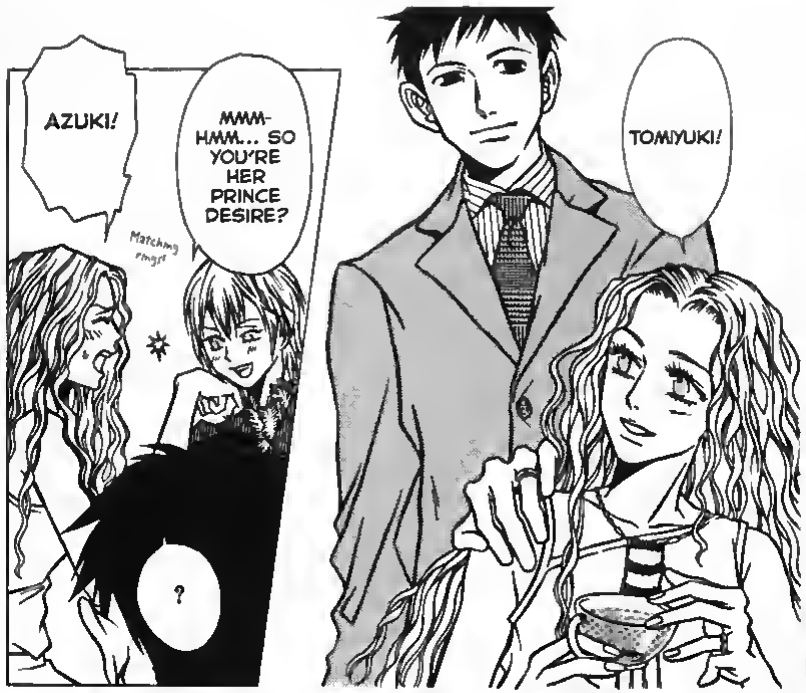

WOW! PRINCESS AURORA?!
THAT'S GREAT! THAT MAKES YOU THE LEAD, RIGHT?

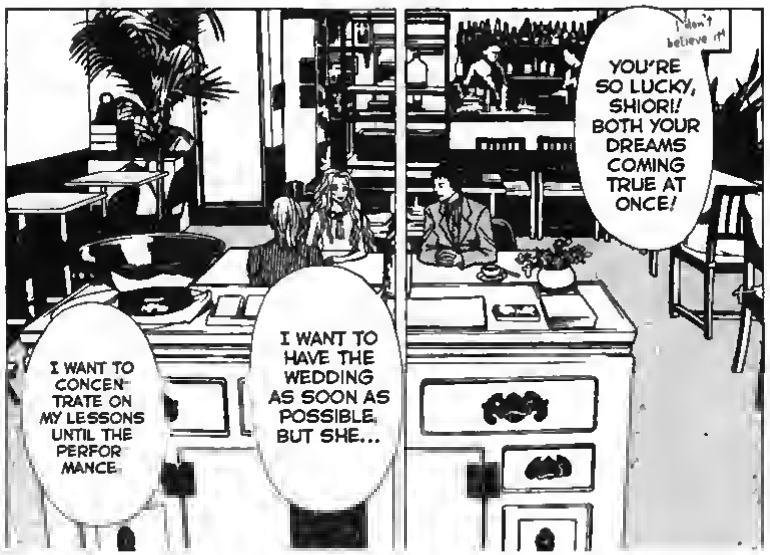

AZUKI, YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING PIROUETTES IN SECRET, HAVEN'T YOU?

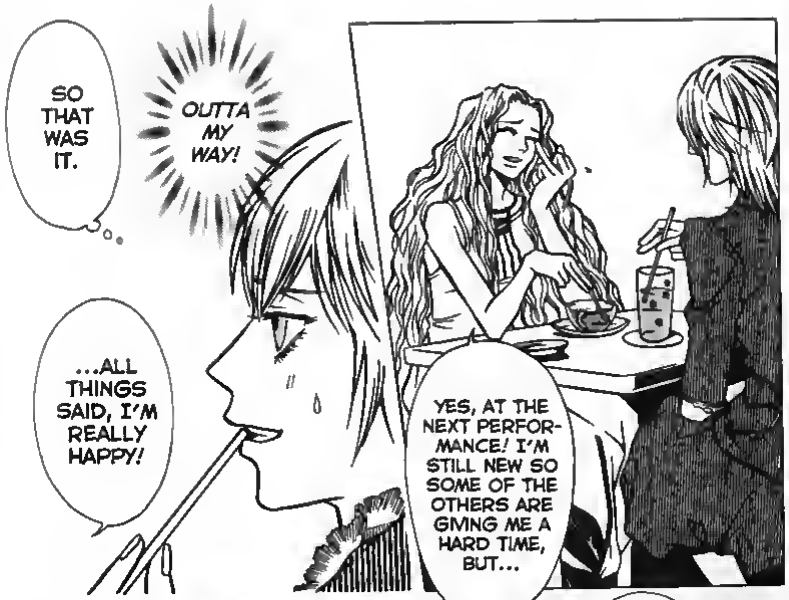


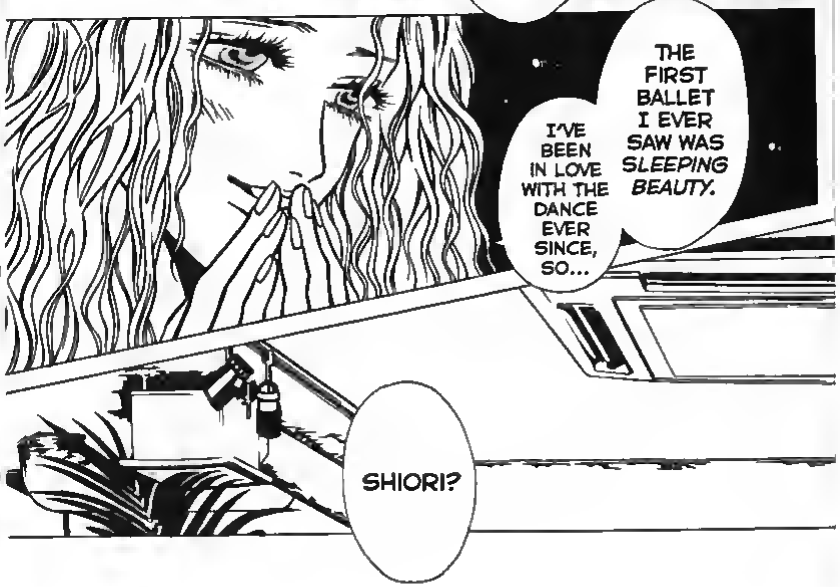
Hee hee!
I will just be excited about spotting her cheat that...
HEY, YOU FOUND ME OUT!
I KNEW IT! I DID THE SAME THING WHEN I FIRST GOT MINE!
JUST MAKE SURE YOU START BY STRENGTHENING THE MUSCLES ON THE BOTTOM OF YOUR FEET. YOU NEED TO DO THAT FIRST.


OUTTA MY WAY!


AZUKI!
MMM-HMM... SO YOU'RE HER PRINCE DESIRE?
Matching rings!
?
TOMIYUKI!


I WANT TO CONCENTRATE ON MY LESSONS UNTIL THE PERFORMANCE.
I WANT TO HAVE THE WEDDING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT SHE...
I don't believe it!
YOU'RE SO LUCKY, SHIORI! BOTH YOUR DREAMS COMING TRUE AT ONCE!


SO THAT WAS IT.
OUTTA MY WAY!
...ALL THINGS SAID, I'M REALLY HAPPY!
YES, AT THE NEXT PERFORMANCE! I'M STILL NEW SO SOME OF THE OTHERS ARE GIVING ME A HARD TIME, BUT...

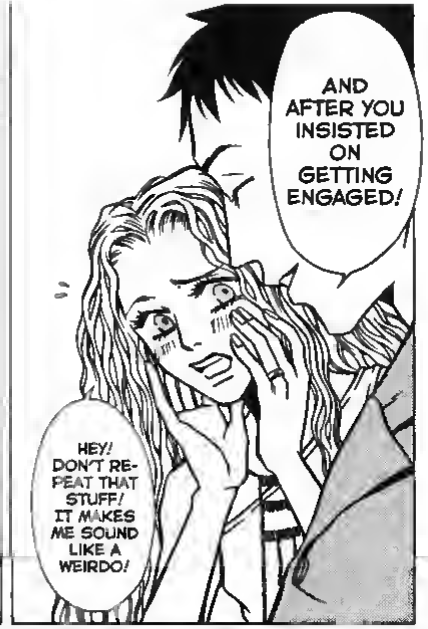

I'VE BEEN IN LOVE WITH THE DANCE EVER SINCE, SO...
THE FIRST BALLET I EVER SAW WAS *SLEEPING BEAUTY.*
SHIORI?

I'M HUNGRY, AZUKI!
I don't know you! I don't know you!
AZUKI!

UMM...
AH!

MR. SHIN-JYUROU...
...PLEASE DON'T WALK NEXT TO ME.

IT'S NOT WEIRD AT ALL.
IN FACT, I'M A BIT JEALOUS.

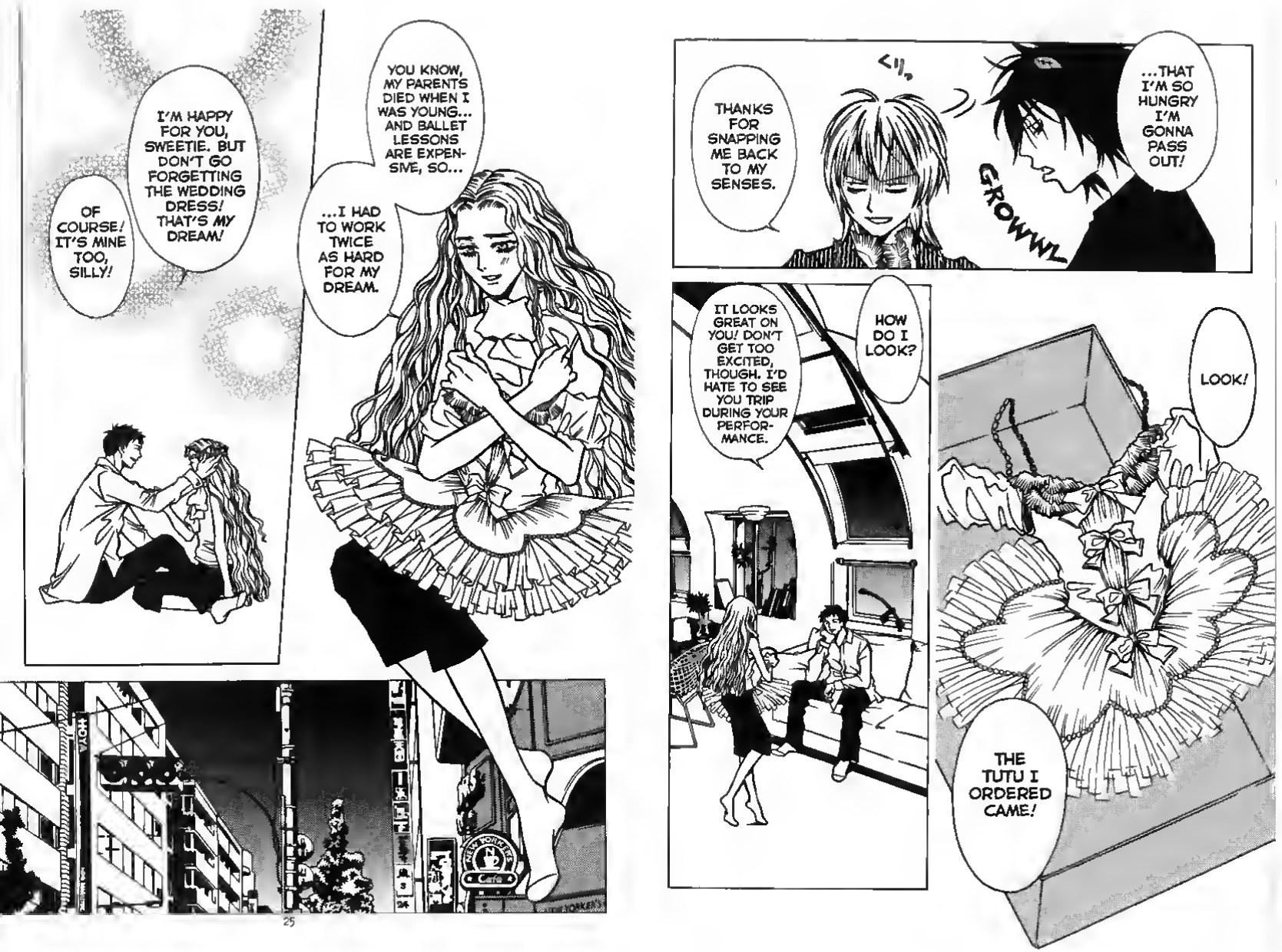

AND AFTER YOU INSISTED ON GETTING ENGAGED!
HEY! DON'T RE-PEAT THAT STUFF! IT MAKES ME SOUND LIKE A WEIRDO!

HIS EYES ARE GREEN! IS HE A FOREIGNER?
HE'S SO CUTE! HE'S GOT TO BE A MODEL!
LET'S TALK TO HIM!
WHAT?!

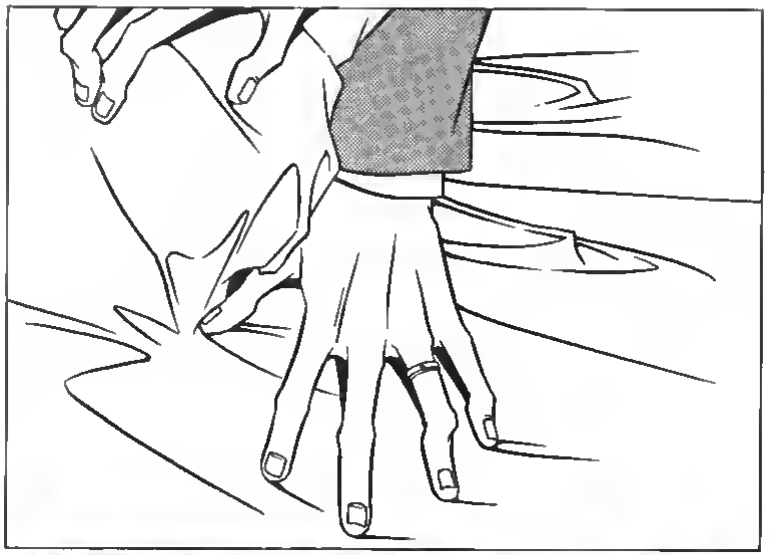
OH...
IS THAT SO?
THE MAN HAS NO SENSE OF DECENCY.
ET PORTA COELI
GRAFFITI: Zombie Mansion
OOH! NOT THOSE BRATS AGAIN!
WELL, THAT SUCKS.

BECAUSE YOU STAND OUT!
EEK! EEK!
WHY NOT?
I'm still hungry
NOT HER, THE GUY.
THE GUY?! YOU SWING THAT WAY, TOO?!
THAT'S SHIORI'S FIANCE!
YOU WERE SPYING?! KEEP YOUR GRUBBY MITTS OFF SHIORI! I MEAN IT!
SO... WHO WAS THAT YOU WERE JUST WITH?

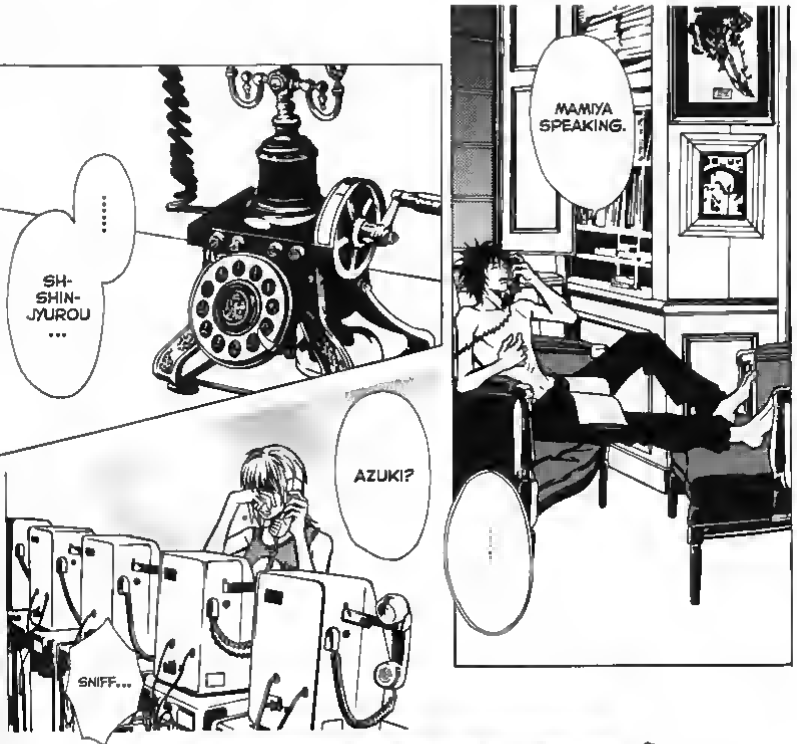
THAT MATTERS FAR MORE THAN WHAT COUNTRY YOU'RE IN.
BUT PRESERVING SOMEONE'S DIGNITY AND EASING THEIR FAMILY'S GRIEF...
I'M USED TO THE MISUNDER-STANDINGS AND PREJUDICE.
I'M GONNA SPIN THOSE LITTLE SHITS ON THEIR HEADS! THEY'LL HAVE BALD SPOTS BEFORE THEY'RE OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL!
PLEASE DON'T MAKE THAT FACE...
...OR I'LL BELIEVE THAT LOOK IS MEANT ONLY FOR ME.
BUT THE BIGGEST ISSUE RIGHT NOW IS...
...OUT HERE CREMATION IS FAR MORE COMMON AND RELIGIOUS VIEWS ARE VERY DIFFERENT. EMBALMING IS HARD FOR PEOPLE TO ACCEPT.
IN AMERICA, MOST PEOPLE ARE BURIED, SO EMBALMING'S NORMAL, BUT...


OF COURSE! IT'S MINE TOO, SILLY!
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU, SWEETIE. BUT DON'T GO FORGETTING THE WEDDING DRESS! THAT'S MY DREAM!
YOU KNOW, MY PARENTS DIED WHEN I WAS YOUNG... AND BALLET LESSONS ARE EXPENSIVE, SO...
...I HAD TO WORK TWICE AS HARD FOR MY DREAM.
THANKS FOR SNAPPING ME BACK TO MY SENSES.
GROWWL
...THAT I'M SO HUNGRY I'M GONNA PASS OUT!
IT LOOKS GREAT ON YOU! DON'T GET TOO EXCITED, THOUGH. I'D HATE TO SEE YOU TRIP DURING YOUR PERFORMANCE.
HOW DO I LOOK?
LOOK!
THE TUTU I ORDERED CAME!

MY DREAM...
I'M SORRY.
WE DID OUR BEST TO REVIVE HER, BUT...
HER HEART HAD ALREADY STOPPED WHEN SHE WAS BROUGHT IN.
!!
OH!
MY TU-



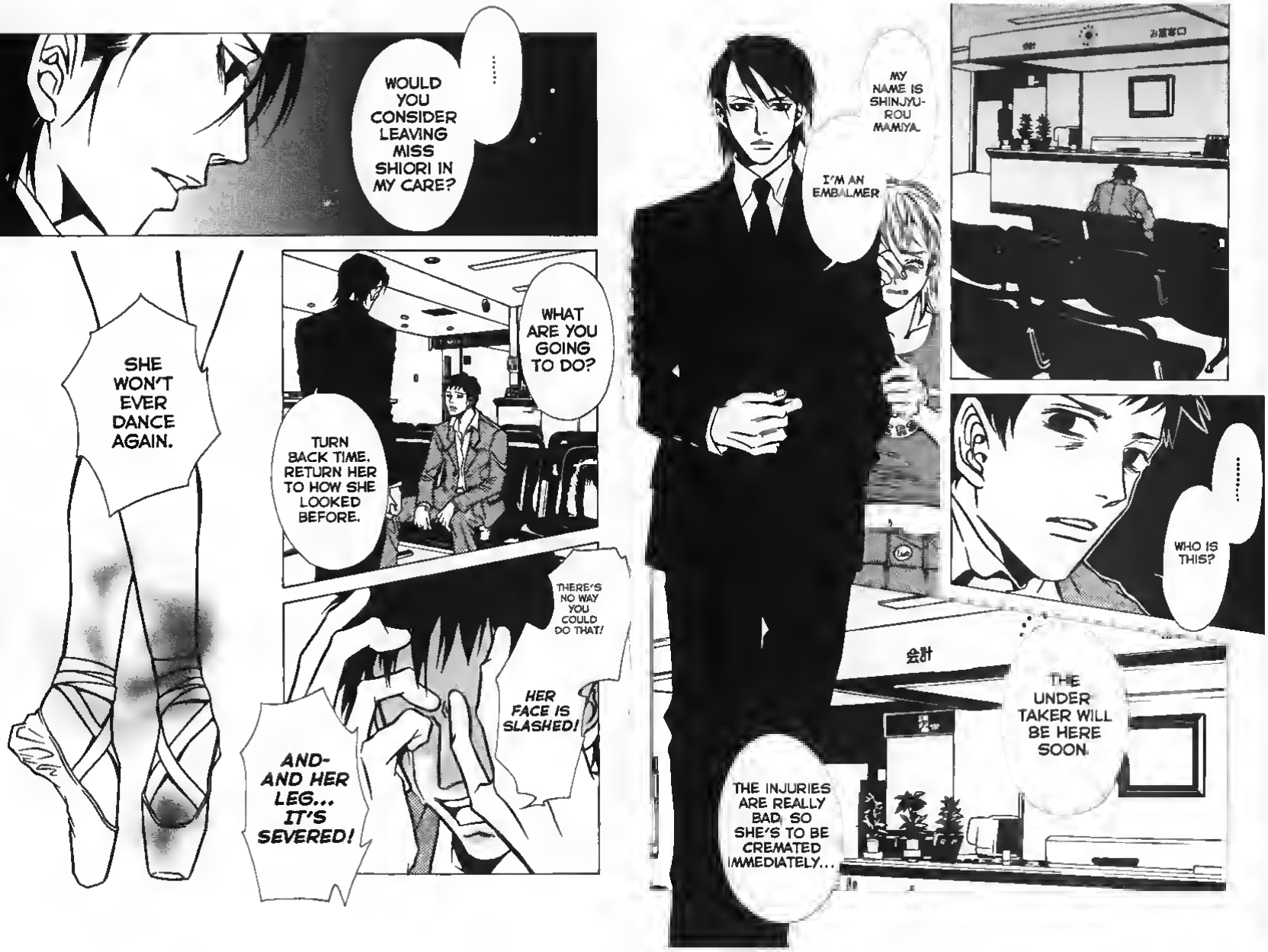
GO AWAY!
SHIORI!
WHAT CAN I–?
.....
PLEASE...


SH-SHIN-JYUROU...
.....
MAMIYA SPEAKING.
.....
AZUKI?
SNIFF...

H-HELP SHIORI... PLEASE...
PLEASE, SHIN-JYUROU... I-I-I NEED YOUR HELP.

DON'T LOOK AT HER.
DON'T LOOK...
.....

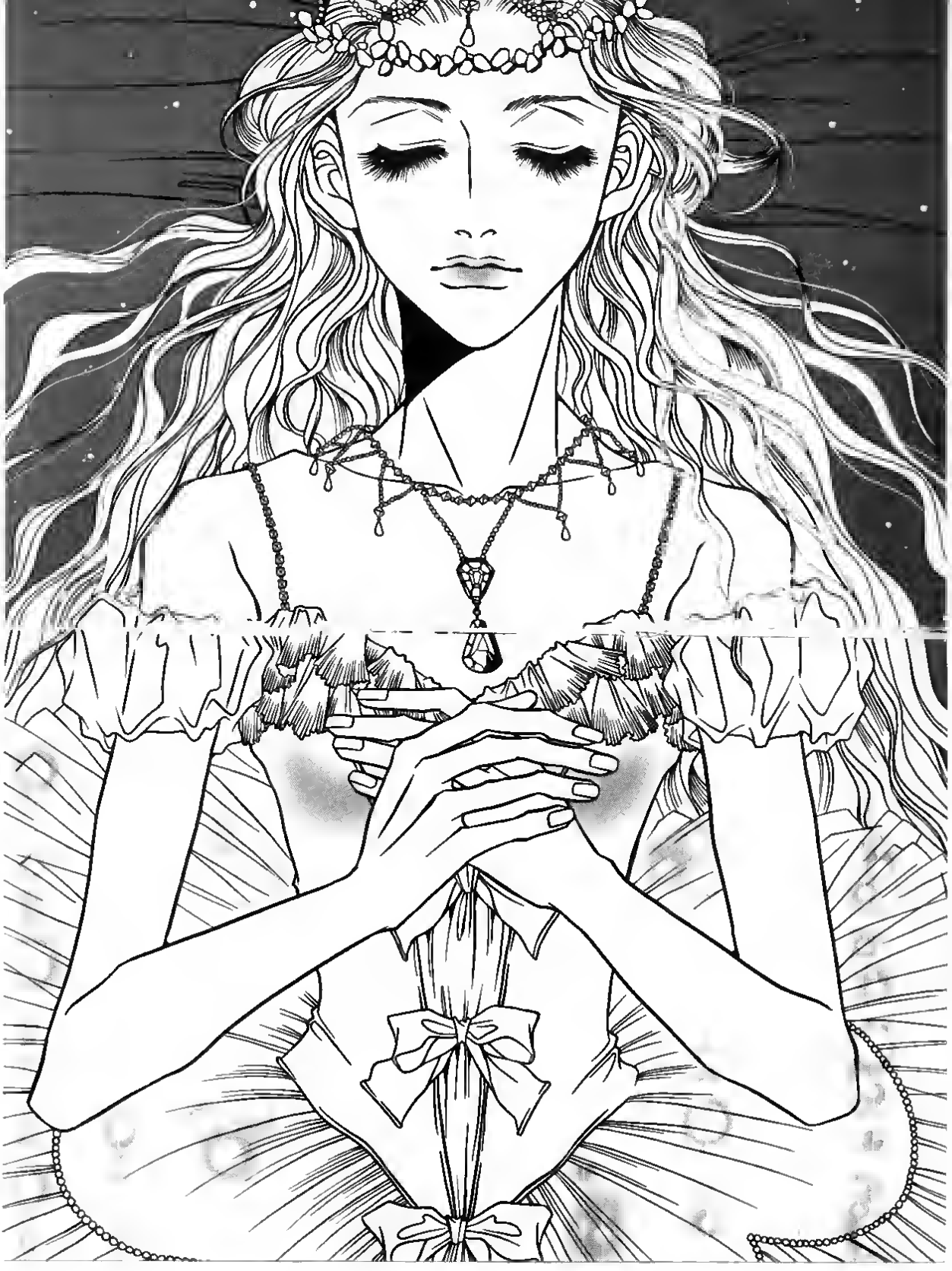
KRRRRNG
RRRNG
CHUU

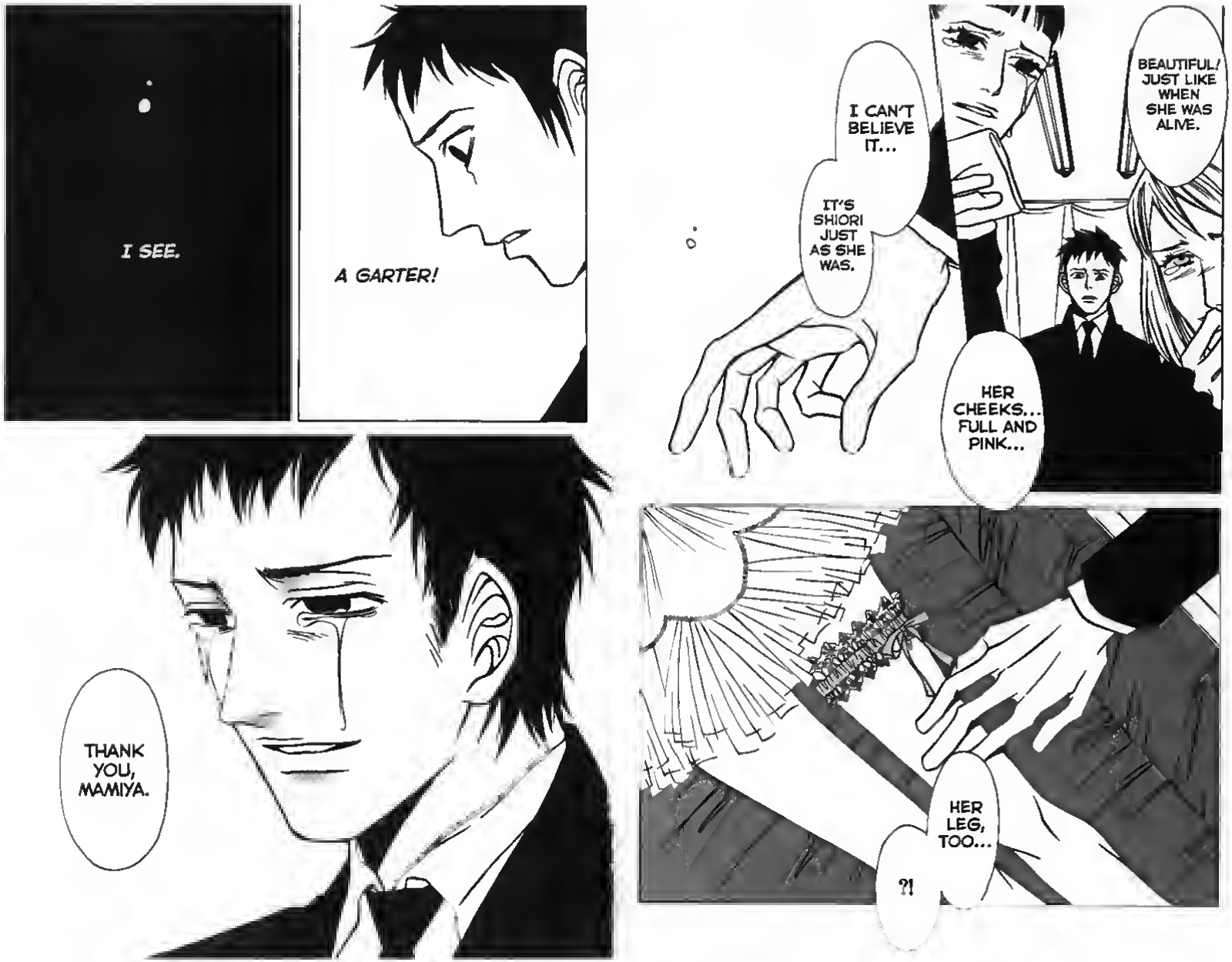

WOULD YOU CONSIDER LEAVING MISS SHIORI IN MY CARE?
.....
SHE WON'T EVER DANCE AGAIN.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
TURN BACK TIME. RETURN HER TO HOW SHE LOOKED BEFORE.
THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD DO THAT!
HER FACE IS SLASHED!
AND- AND HER LEG... IT'S SEVERED!
MY NAME IS SHINJYU-ROU MAMIYA.
I'M AN EMBALMER
THE INJURIES ARE REALLY BAD, SO SHE'S TO BE CREMATED IMMEDIATELY...
THE UNDER TAKER WILL BE HERE SOON.
WHO IS THIS?
.....

HEY, I WANNA HELP, TOO!
I'LL DO ANY-THING, SO–
.....
THEN GO BUY A GARTER BELT.
A BLUE ONE.
WHAT?!
TIME...
...BEGINS TO TURN BACK.
CAN YOU...
...REALLY DO THAT?
THAT'S NOT TRUE. IT'LL BE OKAY. HER BODY CAN BE RESTORED.
SHE'LL BE ABLE TO WEAR HER DRESS THE WAY SHE WANTED AND...
...SHE WILL BE IN A STERILE STATE SO YOU CAN KISS HER GOODBYE.

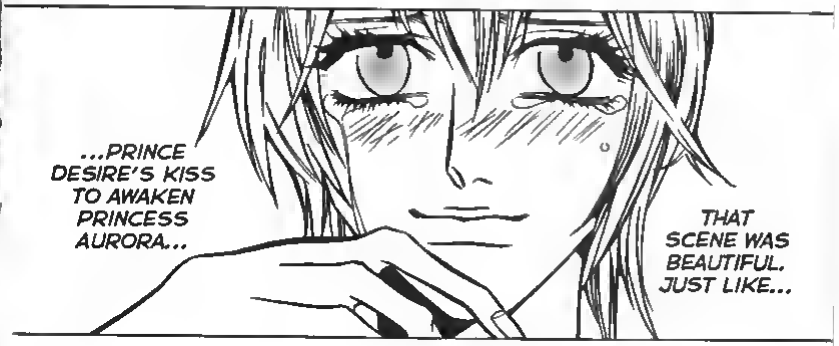
TO THE YOUNG PRIMA...
...MAY YOU FIND MUCH HAPPINESS IN HEAVEN.
YOU'RE IN THE WAY.
YOU JERK!
YOU SAID YOU'D DO ANYTHING. HURRY UP AND GO.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?!
WHAT HAS THAT GOT TO DO WITH THIS?!

!!
NOW...
...I WILL OPEN THE LID FOR VIEWING.
WILL IT BE AN OPEN CASKET?
WHO KNOWS? SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS A PRETTY BAD ACCIDENT.
THEY WERE GETTING MARRIED IN JUNE.




I SEE.
A GARTER!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
IT'S SHIORI JUST AS SHE WAS.
BEAUTIFUL! JUST LIKE WHEN SHE WAS ALIVE.
HER CHEEKS... FULL AND PINK...
HER LEG, TOO...
?!
THANK YOU, MAMIYA.

TOMIYUKI WANTED ME TO GIVE YOU A MESSAGE. HE SAID TO THANK YOU FOR THE WEDDING DRESS.
AZUKI ...
...HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD OF SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLUE"?
WHAT?
BUT IT WAS JUST HER TUTU... I DON'T GET IT.
.....



...OR THE KISS A GROOM WOULD GIVE TO HIS BRIDE.

Embalming 1
Sleeping Beauty
End

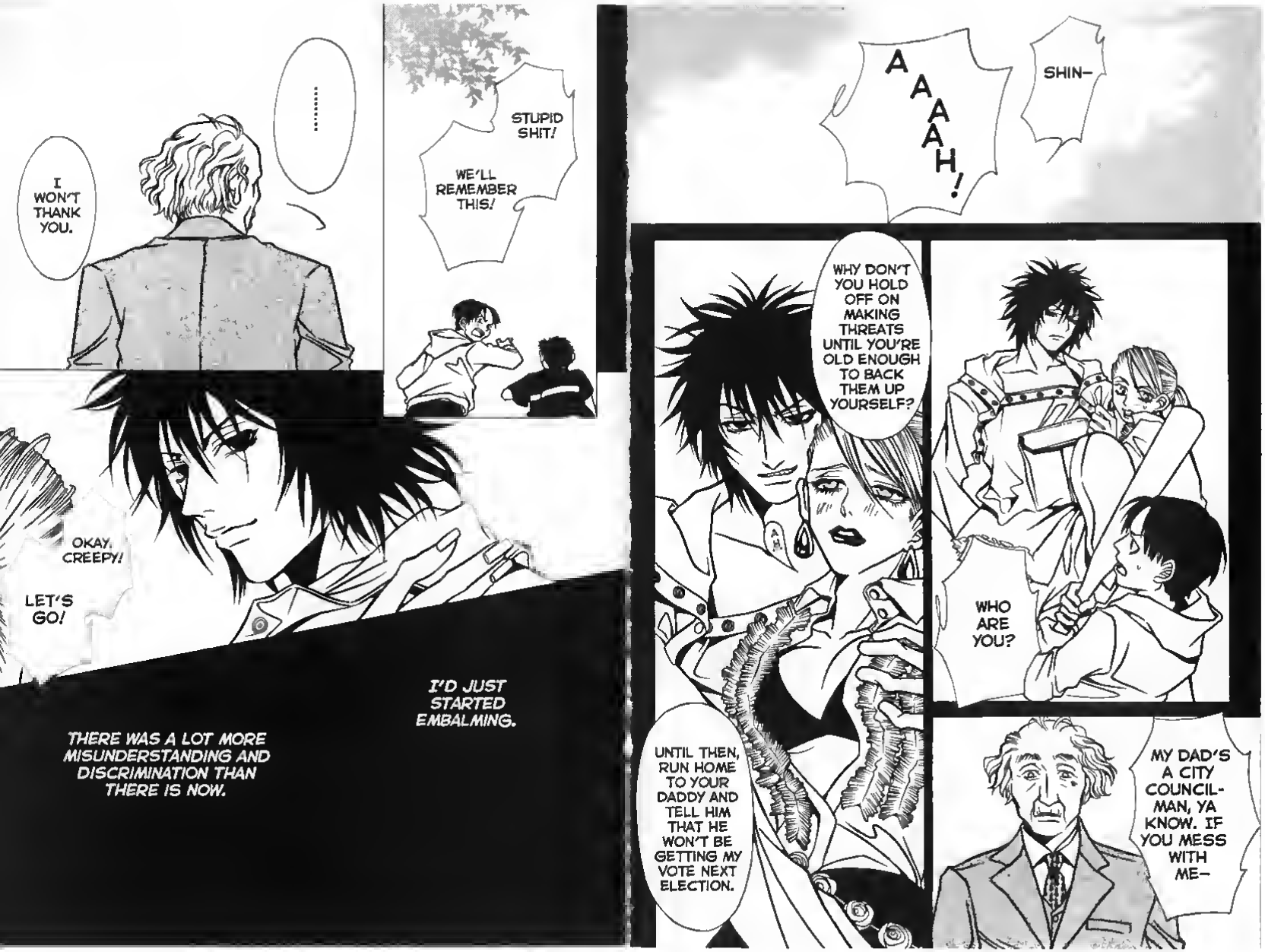
エンバーミング [embalming]

The lasting preservation of a corpse is one of the key qualities of embalming. It is said that once a body is treated, its peaceful appearance is preserved forever.

Man, I was stupid getting my hopes up again.
HE KNOWS I DON'T LIKE PLACES LIKE THIS...
IT'S THE ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR DEATHS.
A FOUL-MOUTHED OLD MAN AND HIS LOVER.

NOTE: In Japan, graves are for families, not single people. The ones with the stone are shared in the "back" of the cemetery.

OLD MAN CLOCK!
ガーン!
WHO'S THAT?
JUST A WEIRD OLD MAN WHO LIKES HANGING AROUND THE PARK. DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM.
STAY AWAY FROM MY MEMORIES!
DON'T YOU GET BORED STARING AT THIS DUMB OLD CLOCK ALL DAY?!
きゃはは
YOU BRATS AGAIN, EH?!
OUCH!
HE WAS THE FIRST PERSON I EVER PROFESSIONALLY EMBALMED.
TICK
TICK
TICK
FIVE AFTER. WANNA DROP BY THE GROCERY STORE ON THE WAY HOME?
I'll cook you something!
TICK
WHAT TIME IS IT?

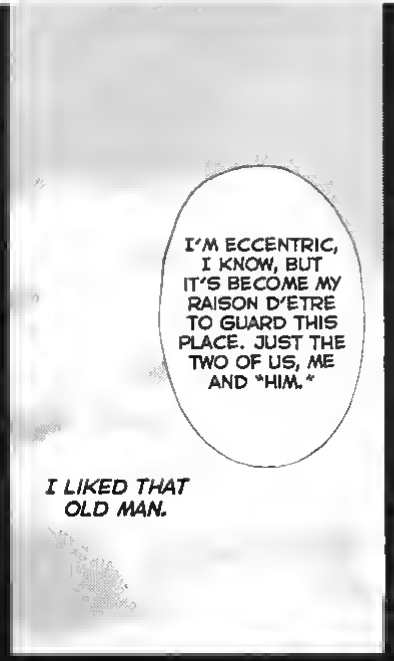

AAAAH!
SHIN-
WHY DON'T YOU HOLD OFF ON MAKING THREATS UNTIL YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO BACK THEM UP YOURSELF?
WHO ARE YOU?
UNTIL THEN, RUN HOME TO YOUR DADDY AND TELL HIM THAT HE WON'T BE GETTING MY VOTE NEXT ELECTION.
MY DAD'S A CITY COUNCIL-MAN, YA KNOW. IF YOU MESS WITH ME-
STUPID SHIT!
WE'LL REMEMBER THIS!
.....
I WON'T THANK YOU.
OKAY, CREEPY!
LET'S GO!
I'D JUST STARTED EMBALMING.
THERE WAS A LOT MORE MISUNDERSTANDING AND DISCRIMINATION THAN THERE IS NOW.

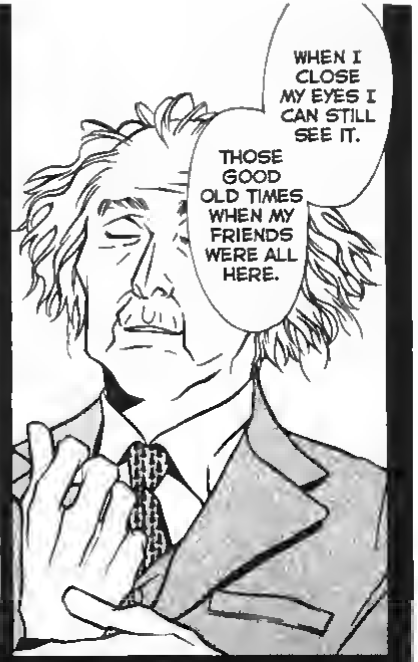
YOU'RE THE TYPE THAT HAS A LOT OF WATCHES, BUT KEEPS LOSING THEM, AREN'T YOU?
A DIFFERENT GIRL EVERY DAY! RATHER EXTRA-VAGANT, HMM?
HEY, KID! YOU HERE ALONE? THAT'S A FIRST.
WHAT?
A MAN WHO TAKES CARE OF ONE WATCH, TAKES CARE OF ONE WOMAN.
YOU CAN TELL A MAN'S WAY WITH WOMEN BY THE WAY HE TREATS HIS TIME-PIECES.
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU TURN PEOPLE INTO MUMMIES, RIGHT? THAT'S CREEPY.
WITH OUR PROCESS THERE IS LITTLE WASTE, AND WHAT THE DISPOSAL EQUIPMENT EMITS IS IN A STATE CLOSE TO WATER.
YOU DRAIN BLOOD FROM THE CORPSES? DOESN'T THAT SPREAD DISEASE?
STRICTLY SPEAKING, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE. OUR GOAL IS TO RETURN THEIR APPEARANCE TO WHAT IT WAS WHEN THEY WERE ALIVE AND TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFECTION.
A BEAUTIFUL FAREWELL FOR THE ONE YOU LOVE.
IT'S MY JOB TO ASSIST WITH THAT.
...IT WAS A NORMAL REACTION.
I GUESS I WON'T BE GETTING ANY WORK FOR A WHILE.
FROM THE JAPANESE POINT OF VIEW, WHERE ALTERING CORPSES IS FROWNED UPON...

SO WHEN IT STOPS, IT'S JUST FOLLOWING ITS MASTER IN DEATH, EH?
THAT'S POETIC.
THERE USED TO BE MANY PEOPLE WHO'D UNDERSTAND THAT KIND OF THINKING.
WATCH TECHNICIANS LIKE ME AND ANTIQUE COLLECTORS, OF COURSE.
THERE WAS A GROUP OF US THAT WOULD HANG AROUND THIS CLOCK AND TALK UNTIL THE SUN WENT DOWN.
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU, YOUNG MAN?
THINGS WILL CHANGE ONCE YOU GET A REAL WATCH.
YES... ONE LIKE THIS ONE, HMM?
WELL, YOU'RE WRONG. I DON'T WEAR A WATCH.
I HAVE GIRLS TO TELL ME WHAT TIME IT IS.
A REAL BEAUTY, AIN'T SHE? SHE'S SELF-WINDING.
SWINGING YOUR ARMS WINDS THE SPRING.
AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE, SHE'LL KEEP TICKING RIGHT ALONG WITH ME.

NEITHER OF US IS IN A POSITION WHERE WE CAN PICK AND CHOOSE WORK, ARE WE?
SOME THANKS FOR BRINGING YOU WORK...
-You filthy old man.
IT'S IMPROPER TO CALL THIS A WATCH! IT'S A CALCULATOR!
HEY! ARE YOU TOUCHING THOSE PARTS WITH YOUR BARE HANDS?! THEY'LL RUST FROM THE SALT AND OILS!
I SPECIALIZE IN THE RESTORATION OF SELF-WINDERS!

YOU KNOW, I LIKE FIXING BROKEN TIMEPIECES.
SO NOW I'M BACTERIA OR SOMETHING?
IT'S A BIT LIKE YOUR EMBALMING. I LIKE RESURRECTING THE DEAD...

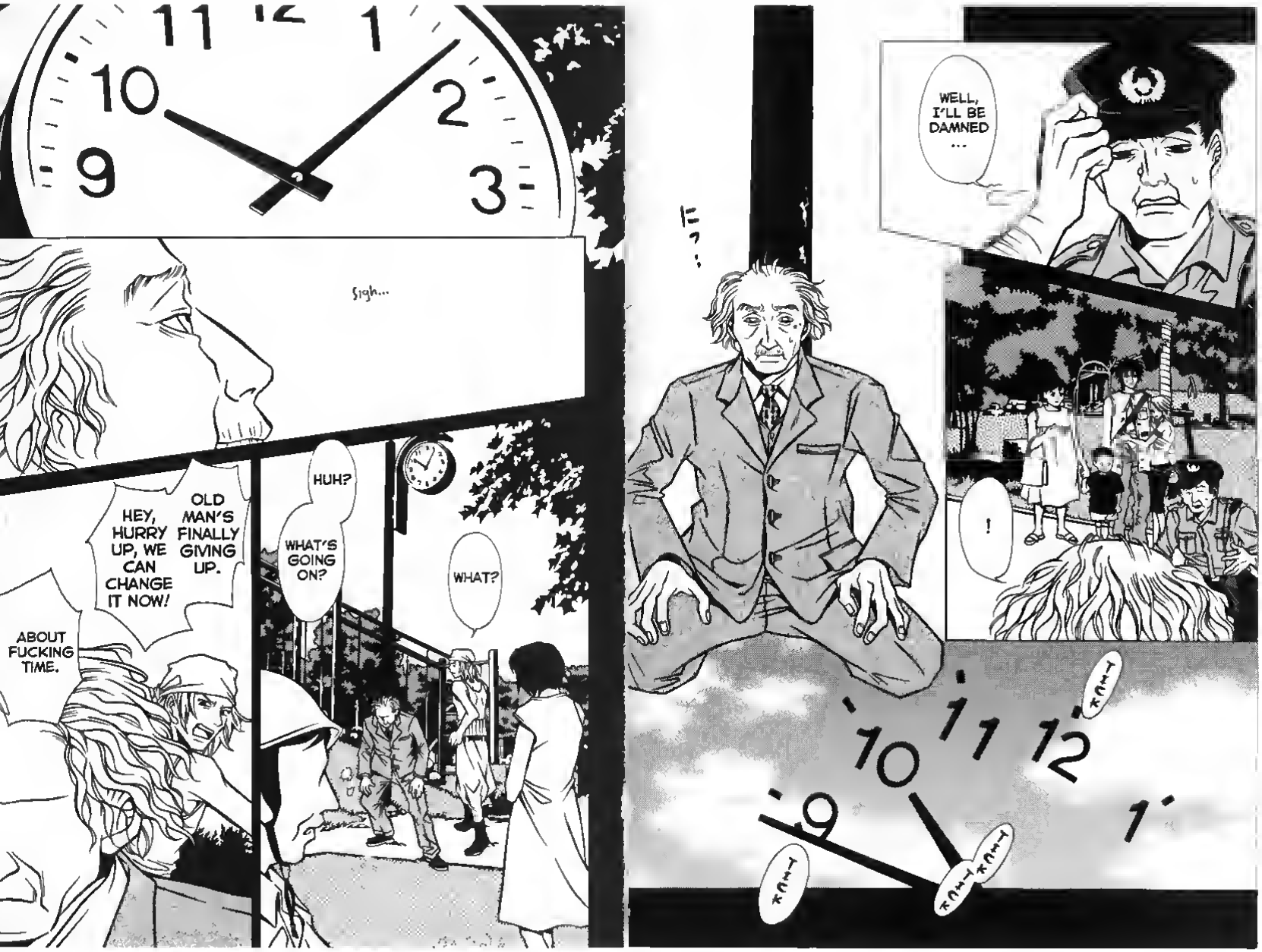




I THINK IT WAS BECAUSE WHEN YOU GOT RIGHT DOWN TO IT, WE WEREN'T ALL THAT DIFFERENT.

SO WHAT GOES FIRST?
Uh... WE'LL START BY TAKING OFF THE TOP PART, I SUPPOSE.
HUH? WE'RE SWAPPING IT FOR A NEW ONE. OUTTA THE WAY, PLEASE.
HEY! WHAT'RE YOU DOING TO THAT CLOCK?!
THIS DIRTY OLD CLOCK WAS STINKING UP THE PARK!
ABOUT DAMN TIME!
A CRAFTSMAN WILL ONLY BECOME FULLY QUALIFIED WITH LOTS OF EXPERIENCE.
...SO I WON'T MIND BEING YOUR GUINEA PIG WHEN I DIE.

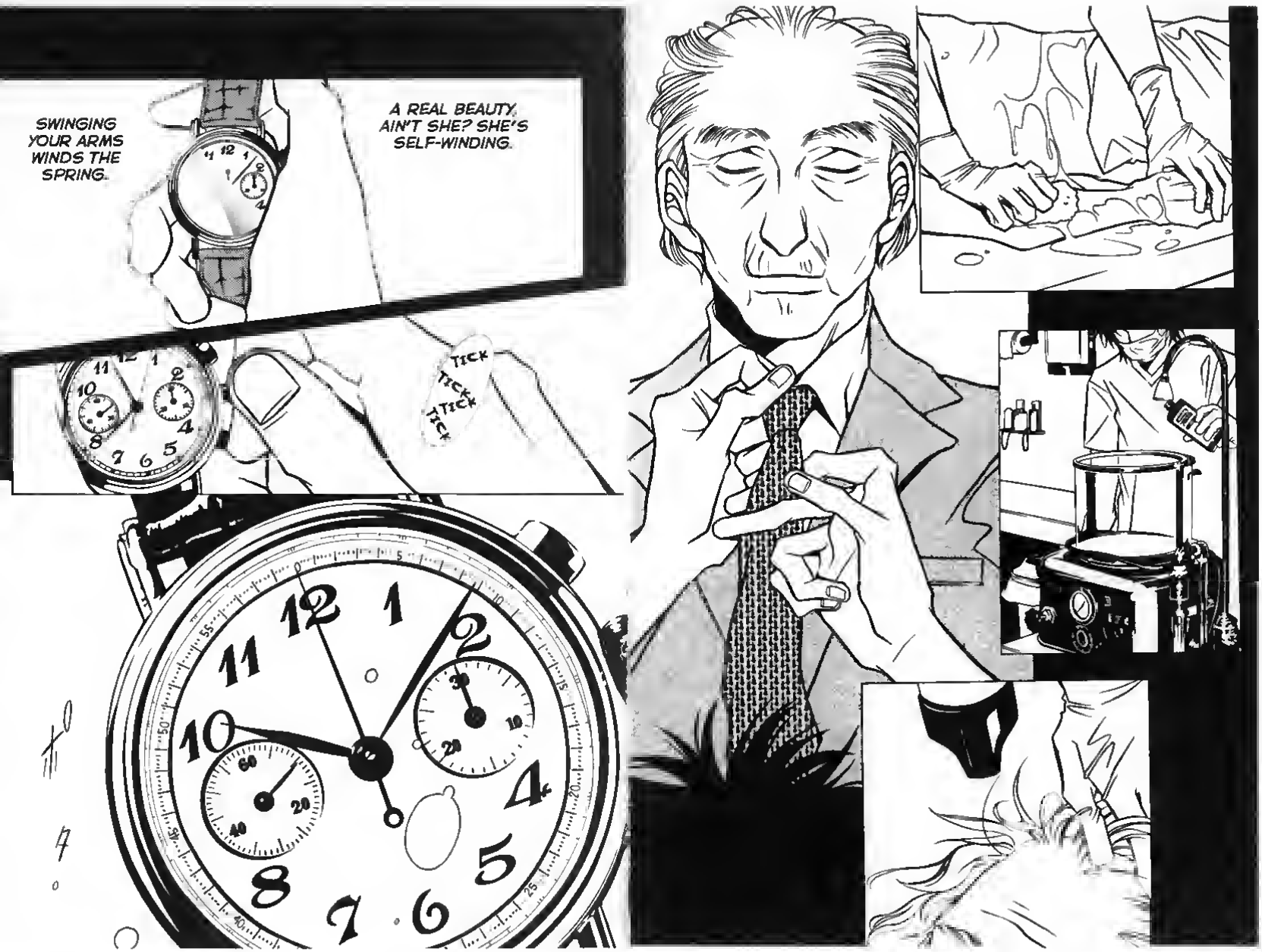
YAWN...
I DON'T HAVE WORK TODAY SO LET'S GO SOMEWHERE FUN. PLEEEEASE?
HEY...
YOU'RE BOTHERING THE FOLKS IN THE PARK AND CAUSING TROUBLE FOR THESE WORKERS. THEY'RE JUST DOING THEIR JOBS.
I'M NOT BUDGING FROM THIS SPOT!
IF YOU'RE GONNA KILL THIS CLOCK, THEN YOU CAN KILL ME RIGHT ALONG WITH HIM!
HUH?
SHIT! WE'VE GOT A CRAZY ON OUR HANDS. CALL THE COPS!
THE NEW ONE'S GONNA BE DIGITAL! IT EVEN FORECASTS THE WEATHER!
ALL THANKS TO YOUR DAD! RIGHT, HIRAI?
GET AWAY! I WON'T LET YOU TOUCH HIM!
WHOA! WHAT'S WITH YOU, DUDE?


Sigh...
ABOUT FUCKING TIME.
HEY, HURRY UP, WE CAN CHANGE IT NOW!
OLD MAN'S FINALLY GIVING UP.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HUH?
WHAT?
WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED ...
!
TWIT
TWIT
TWIT
TWIT

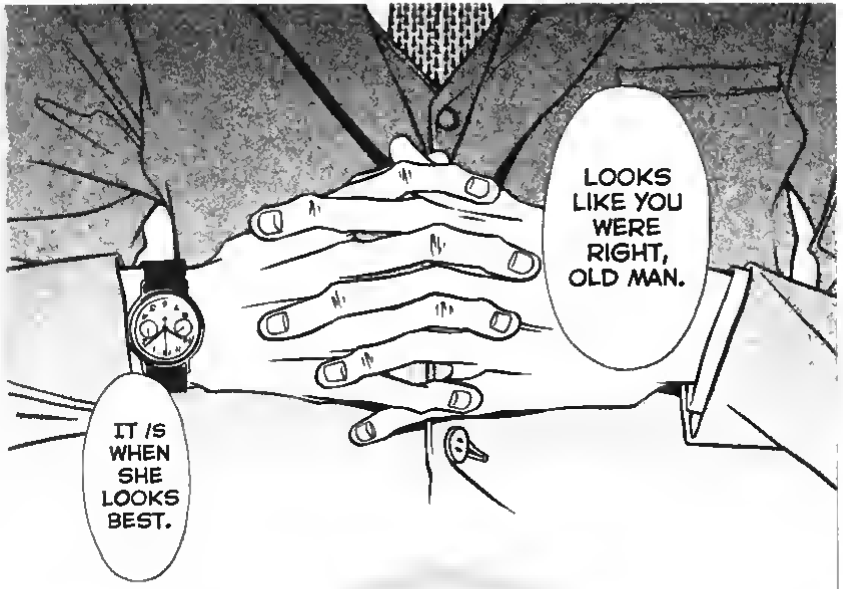
OLD MAN...
EIGHT MINUTES PAST TEN.
YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY 'BOUT ME. I STILL HAVE THIS OLD GIRL.
THAT'S THE TIME WHEN THE HANDS LOOK THEIR BEST, YOU KNOW.
HEY, OLD MAN!
...IT'S JUST THAT IF I HAVE TO LOSE HIM... WELL, I WANTED TO BE THERE ONE LAST TIME.
HMPH.
I'M NO FOOL. I KNOW MY BEING STUBBORN WON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE...
WHY'D YOU SUDDENLY GIVE UP?!

YES, THIS IS MAMIYA.
THE POLICE?
THE APARTMENT MANAGER FOUND HIM.
LOOKS LIKE IT WAS TWO DAYS AFTER HE'D PASSED.
I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT WEIRD OLD MAN LATELY.
I'M GLAD. NOW I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE KIDS AS MUCH.

I'LL CARRY OUT HIS EMBALMING AS PER THIS LETTER.
DRY ICE WILL NOT BE NECESSARY.
MAY I HAVE A COPY OF THE AUTOPSY REPORT?
I'LL CONTACT THE PROPER AGENCIES AND HAVE THE BODY TRANSPORTED HERE.
WHY WAS I CONTACED?
THE CAUSE WAS ACUTE HEART FAILURE. IF ONLY SOMEONE HAD BEEN THERE...
THERE WAS A LETTER ADDRESSED TO YOU.
IT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS WRITTEN QUITE A WHILE AGO.
.....


SWINGING YOUR ARMS WINDS THE SPRING.
A REAL BEAUTY, AIN'T SHE? SHE'S SELF-WINDING.
TICK
TICK
TICK
TICK

HEY...
...WHY'D YOU BRING ME HERE ANYWAY?
SO YOU CAN TELL HOW SOMEONE HANDLES A WOMAN BY HOW THEY TREAT THEIR WATCH, EH?
OH, 'CUZ I THOUGHT IT'D BE FUN TO WATCH YOU GET SCARED.
SURE. THAT IS, IF YOU CAN MAKE IT BACK THROUGH THE GRAVES BY YOURSELF.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
I'M GOING HOME!
Heh heh
Shake
Ok, I can make it



AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE, SHE'LL KEEP RIGHT ON TICKING WITH ME.

Embalming 2
The Old Man's Watch
End

EVERYONE LOOKS AT ME.
EXCUSE ME, WE'RE ASKING FASHION-CONSCIOUS PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SURVEY...
HOW NICE! WHO DOES YOUR HAIR?
EVERYONE WANTS TO TALK TO ME.
EVERYONE.
HAVE I SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE? MAYBE ON TV?
PEDESTRIANS, REALLY. EACH ONE OF THEM.

I'VE SEEN HIM ON MY WAY HOME EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS. IT'S LIKE HE'S WAITING FOR ME.
HEY! I SAID...
HMM?
HIM.

PEOPLE ARE SO TIRING.
THEY BEND OVER BACKWARD JUST FOR MY GOOD LOOKS.
LET'S GO BACK TO YOUR PLACE, SHINJYU-ROU.

FROM MY LONG SENSUAL FINGERS...
...TO MY COLLARBONES AND ANKLES...
...TO THE LINE FROM MY SHOULDERS DOWN. MY BACKSIT'S PERFECTION MADE PHYSICAL!
BUT MY FAVORITE FEATURE IS MY EXOTIC ALMOND-SHAPED EYES!
OBVIOUSLY, HE SEES ME AS COMPETITION.
AS IF I'D EVER BE INTERESTED IN ANYONE THAT WOULD DATE HIM.
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
OOPS! I MISSED.
THE PERFECT BODY.
DH... I KINDA LOOK LIKE KIMURA TAKUYA FROM THIS ANGLE.
KAZUO, MAKE SURE YOU PUT YOUR LAUNDRY AWAY!

NOTE Kimura Takuya is a very popular actor in Japan.

...AND THEY'RE ALL OF HIMSELF, ALONE!
I HEAR HIS PLANNER IS FULL OF SNAP-SHOTS...
HE WAS OBSESSED WITH HIS OWN RE-FLECTION IN THE WATER!
You couldn't help falling in, no!
SHE SAID HE GOT PUSHED INTO THE POOL A LOT.
HE WENT TO THE SAME MIDDLE SCHOOL AS HANA.
THAT'S CREEPY!
DON'T FREAK ME OUT!
THAT ISN'T COOL!

I ONLY WANT TO LOOK AT BEAUTIFUL THINGS.

OOH... IF ONLY I COULD LEAN INTO THE MIRROR AND EMBRACE MYSELF.
OH, YOU MEAN NARCISSUS? NO ONE REALLY WANTS TO DRAW HIM.
I HATE THAT CLASS. HE ALWAYS WANTS TO BE THE MODEL.
OH, SKETCH-ING IS THIS AFTER-NOON?

WHAT ARE YOU HUNGRY FOR? I CAN MAKE ANYTHING, YOU KNOW.
CONSTANTLY HAVING A GIRL AROUND PROVES THAT YOU HAVE NO SELF-CONFI-DENCE.
YOU LIVE OFF OF RAMEN AND POWDERED MISO, DON'T YOU?
ANYTHING? REALLY?
I'M NOT MUCH OF A COOK, SO DON'T EXPECT ME TO BE MUCH HELP.
HOT FOOD

THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT ME AGAIN, AREN'T THEY?
DID YOU HEAR ...
REALLY?

...FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE WHO ARE TOO INTIMIDATED BY MY LOOKS TO TALK TO ME.
AT TIMES LIKE THIS, I LOOK AT THEM...
BALMART
Is he staring at me?

I USUALLY DON'T TALK TO PEOPLE, BUT THIS IS A SPECIAL CASE.
HUH?
YES?
I NOTICED, YOU KNOW.
YOU WERE STAR-ING AT ME THAT WHOLE TIME, WEREN'T YOU?
OKAY, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT AND WHY ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT IT TO ME?
DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME. I KNOW YOU WERE CHECKING ME OUT.
SHE'S LOOKING AT ME.
AGAIN.
WHAT?
フム
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, EH?

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR UGLY WORDS.
I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT UGLY THINGS.
I ONLY WANT BEAUTIFUL WORDS AND...
ME?
HAAA
YOU'RE UGLY!
LIKE I'D EVEN GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY!
REALLY!
WHO'S UGLY?

OH, HE LEFT THE BATHROOM LIGHT ON AGAIN.
...BEAUTIFUL THINGS.
KAZUO!
OH GOD! SHIN, COME HERE QUICK!
OOH...
I THOUGHT SO.
PERFEC-TION.

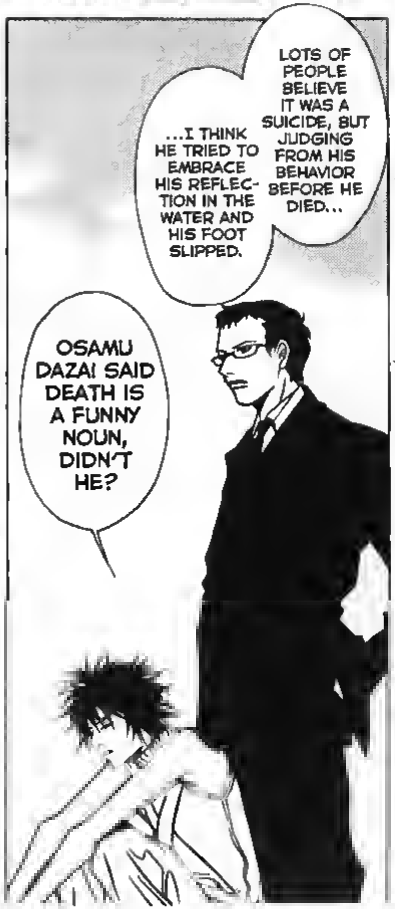
The first step in the embalming process is to cleanse the corpse. The surface of the body is disinfected. Embalming fluids ere then pumped through the arteries via small cuts in areas such as the shoulders. This displacea the blood. After cleansing the corpse once again, eny necessary restorations are performed, the body is clothed and makeup is applied. And with that, the work is complete.

In Japan, the application of makeup...

IT WAS A SUICIDE. WASN'T IT?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID SUCH MEAN THINGS ABOUT HIM.
HEY, DID YOU SEE? HIS FACE... IT'S JUST SO...
OH MY...
Services for
Kazuo Narita
Wake: August 21
6-7 p.m.
Funeral: August 22
12-1 p.m.
Memorial Hall
A GUY... BEAUTIFUL, EH?
THIS IS A FIRST.
WELL, ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE. EVEN THE GODDESSES IN HEAVEN WILL BE BREATHLESS AT THE SIGHT OF YOU.
...differs from America in that the demand is for subtle makeup that is barely noticeable.

...BEAUTIFUL HE IS.
THE WORDS HE WISHED FOR SO MUCH... HOW IRONIC THEY CAN NO LONGER REACH HIS EARS.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL, ALMOST LIKE HE'S SLEEPING.
...ARE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LIES IN THE WORLD.
THE KIND-HEARTED LIES THAT PEOPLE TELL IN RESPECT TO THE DECEASED...
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A PEACEFUL FACE.
HE ALMOST LOOKS LIKE A DOLL, DOESN'T HE?
YES, HOW...

IDIOT!
WOULD YOU STILL IF I DIDN'T LOOK LIKE THIS?
YOU REALLY LIKE ME, DON'T YOU?
HI, AZUKI.
OH, HELLO, MR. RENJI.
WHAT COUNTS IS INSIDE, YOU DUMMY! INSIDE!
DON'T BE SO CONCEITED!

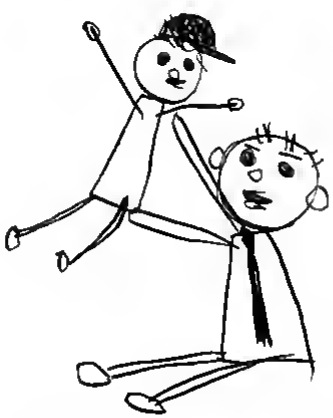

LOTS OF PEOPLE BELIEVE IT WAS A SUICIDE, BUT JUDGING FROM HIS BEHAVIOR BEFORE HE DIED...
...I THINK HE TRIED TO EMBRACE HIS REFLEC-TION IN THE WATER AND HIS FOOT SLIPPED.
OSAMU DAZAI SAID DEATH IS A FUNNY NOUN, DIDN'T HE?

NOTE Osamu Dazai is a famous Japanese novelist

Embalming 3
Narcissus
End

Papa worked too much.

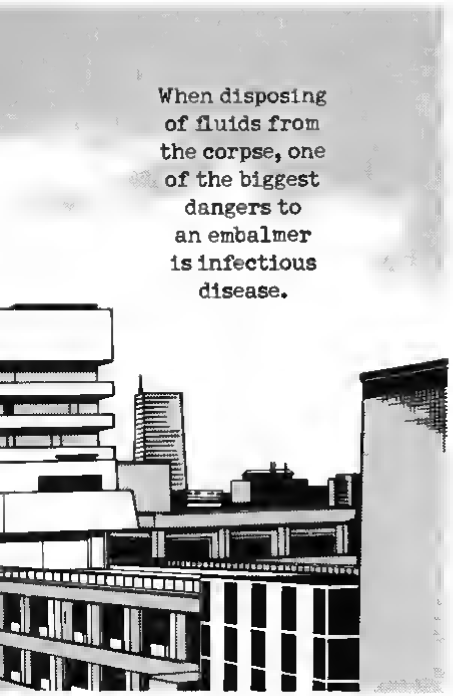
Now papa is in the hospital.
I can't see him. I might get sick too.

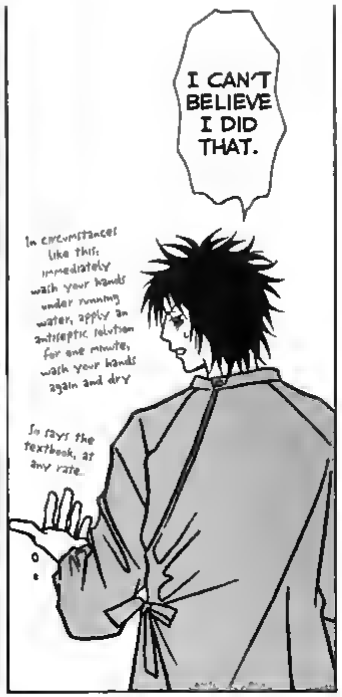


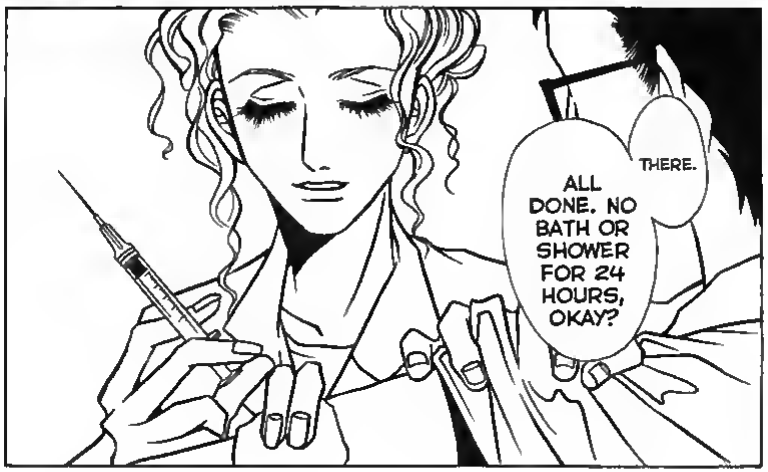
I want papa to get well. I want to be hugged.
I want to play airplane again

エンバーミング [embalming]

They say infectious diseases such as hepatitis and tuberculosis are present in approximately 65% of corpses. Preventing the spread of such infections is an important part of embalming.




I CAN'T BELIEVE I DID THAT.
In circumstances like this, immediately wash your hands under running water, apply an antiseptic solution for one minute, wash your hands again and dry
So says the textbook, at any rate.



NOTE: The below document is a Japanese death certificate

HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU SOMETHING INSTEAD, DOC?
HMPH. YOU CAN HAVE THE SHOT IN YOUR FOREARM WHERE IT REALLY HURTS.
VACCINATION FOR HEPATITIS B.
HAVE HER GIVE YOU ONE, TOO.
INFECTIONS FROM CUTS AND SCRATCHES CAN BE LIFE THREATENING!
BESIDES HEPATITIS, THERE ARE ILLNESSES LIKE AIDS AND TUBERCULOSIS THAT YOU NEED TO BE WARY OF.
SERIOUSLY, THOUGH, I'M NOT KIDDING. BOTH OF YOU NEED TO BE CAREFUL.
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW.
Even after people die, the bacteria inside continue to live.

HEY...
YO, RENJI! PLAYING DOCTOR AGAIN, EH?
WELL, IF IT ISN'T MAMIYA! IT'S BEEN AWHILE. ARE YOU HERE FOR AN STD TEST?
WHAT HAPPENED?
ALWAYS THE QUICK WIT, AREN'T YOU, KOYUKI? JUST A BLOOD TEST TODAY.
Ah ha ha ha!
I CUT MY FINGER ON A BONE. SO...JUST IN CASE, YOU KNOW?
Here!
DON'T YOU EVER WORRY? YOU COULD LEARN SOMETHING FROM KOBAYASHI.
HUH?

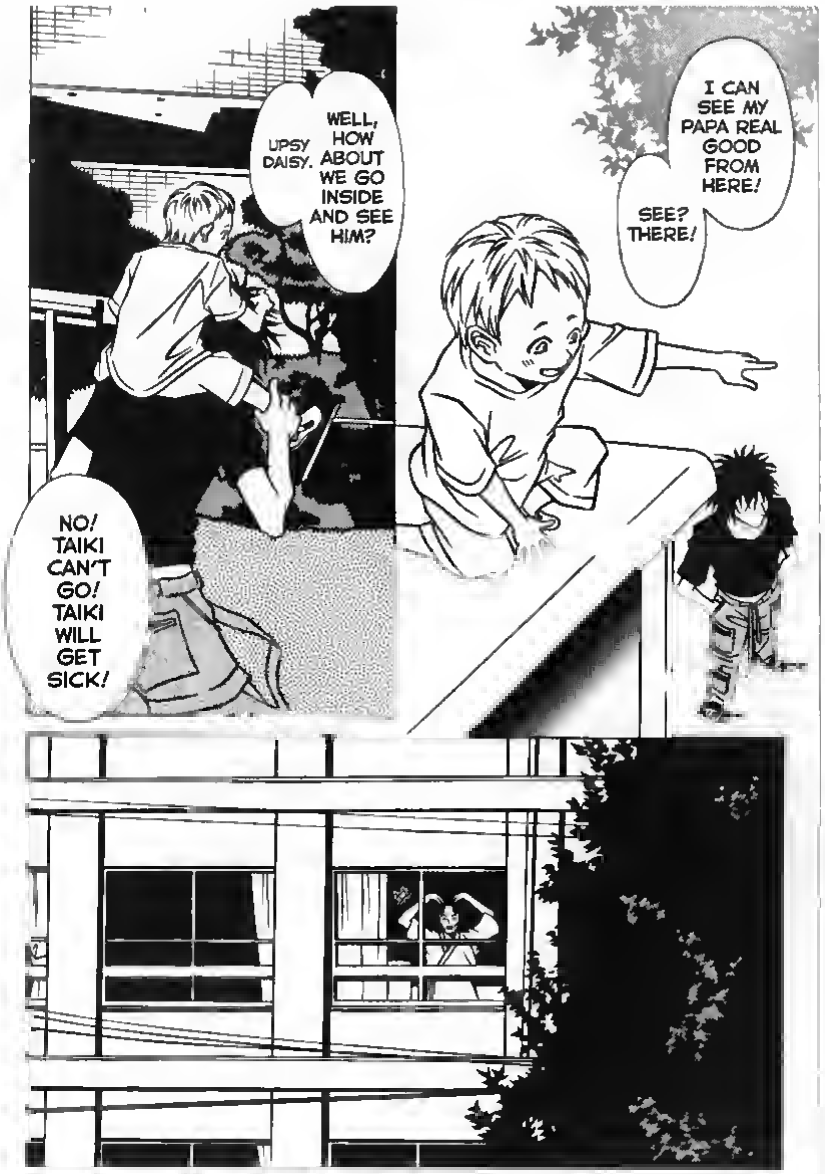
AFTER WORK...
...MY BODY JUST CRAVES PHYSICAL CONTACT.
MADAM, MAY I SEE YOU TO YOUR HOSPITAL ROOM?
QUIT IT! YOU PERVERT!
HEY, KID! WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP THERE?
IT'S DANGER-OUS!

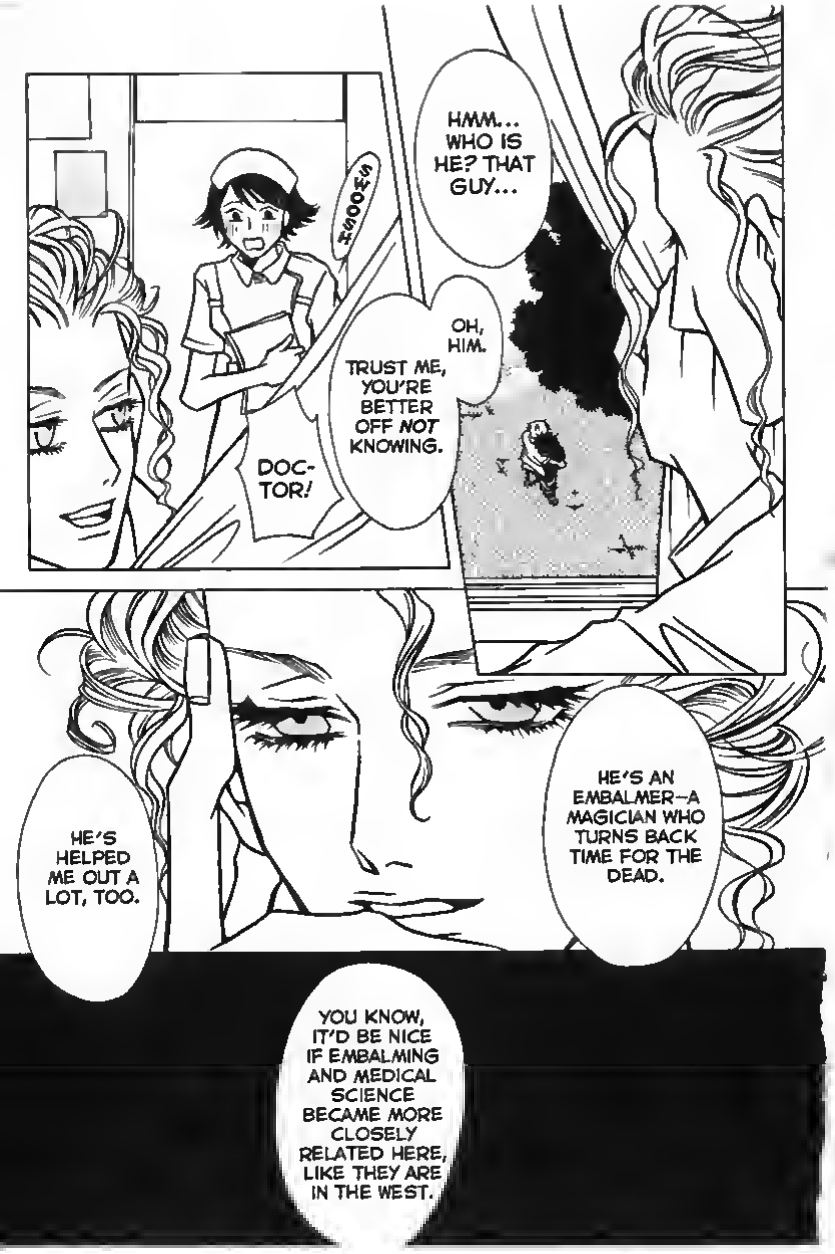
Sadly, those in the funeral industry currently have no protection or legal regulation for dealing with infectious disease.

AAAH!!
IF ONLY THEY'D DIS-CLOSE THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE INFORMATION ON THE DEATH CERTIFI-CATES...
I WAS GOING TO ASK DR. KOYUKI TO INTRODUCE ME TO THAT HOT NEW NURSE SHE HAS WORK-ING FOR HER.
.....
HEY! TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY! OTHERS IN OUR FIELD HAVE ALREADY DIED!
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, LABOR AND WELFARE... SO DAMN LAZY.
THEY'RE GOING TO LET IT GO UNTIL SOME-THING REALLY BAD HAPPENS.

TAIKI!
OH... I'M SO SORRY!
MAMA!
OH, IT'S OKAY.
THE GUYS AT THE OFFICE AREN'T GOING ANY-WHERE.
TAIKI!
HEY, PLAY AIRPLANE WITH ME!
YOUR DAD'S PRETTY FUNNY, HUH?
HERE I AM, PAPA!

HE'S JUST LONELY FROM BEING APART FROM HIS FATHER SO LONG.
Whoa!
I'M SO SORRY.

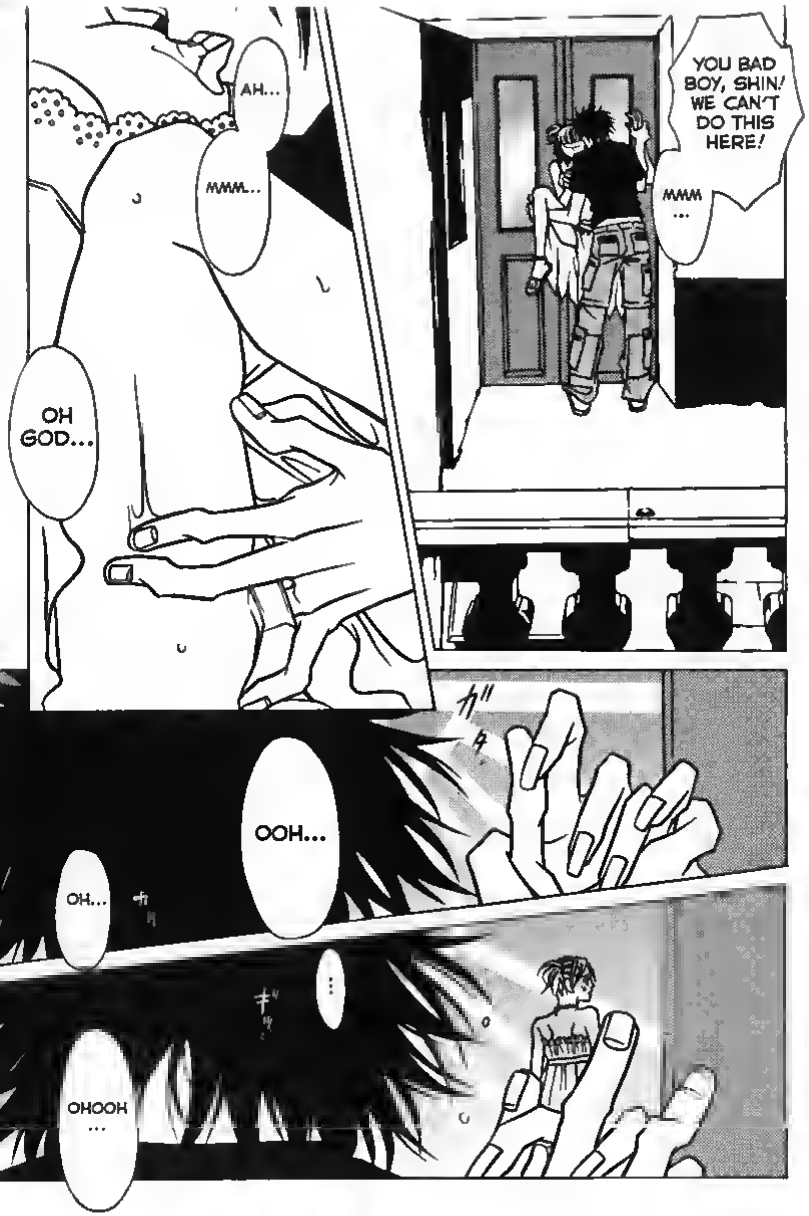

UPSY DAISY.
WELL, HOW ABOUT WE GO INSIDE AND SEE HIM?
NO! TAIKI CAN'T GO! TAIKI WILL GET SICK!
I CAN SEE MY PAPA REAL GOOD FROM HERE!
SEE? THERE!


HMM... WHO IS HE? THAT GUY...
SHOOK
OH, HIM.
TRUST ME, YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT KNOWING.
DOC-TOR!
HE'S AN EMBALMER—A MAGICIAN WHO TURNS BACK TIME FOR THE DEAD.
HE'S HELPED ME OUT A LOT, TOO.
YOU KNOW, IT'D BE NICE IF EMBALMING AND MEDICAL SCIENCE BECAME MORE CLOSELY RELATED HERE, LIKE THEY ARE IN THE WEST.

HE HAS TUBER-CULOSIS. PRETTY SERIOUS. THEY THINK IT'S FROM THE STRESS OF OVER-WORKING.
YOUR HUSBAND IS...?
I HOPE HE GETS BETTER.
THAT'S UNUSUAL, ISN'T IT? WE THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A COLD.
SEEMS IT'S BEEN SPREADING AMONG THE YOUNGER GENER-ATIONS LATELY.
Hey, kid! Don't pull my hair!
Ha ha ha ha!

WHAT?
HUH?
THUMP
HEY, SHINJYU-ROU!
I SAID SHIN-CHAAN!
Say something, will ya?
PACHINKO
Sigh...
I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS HABIT OF MINE.
HEY!

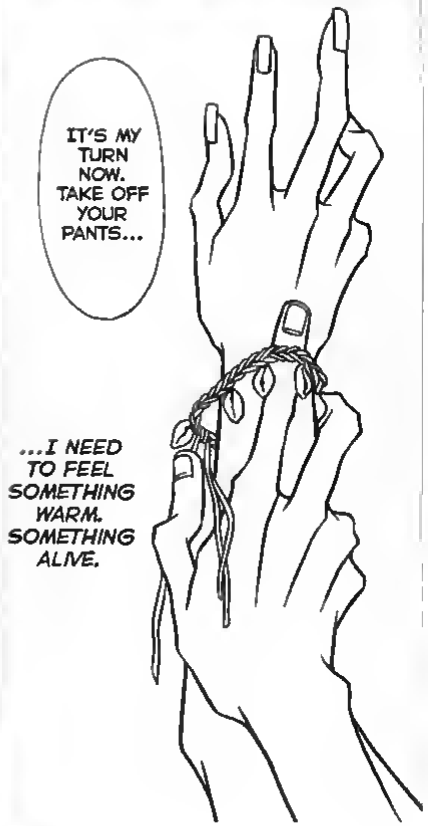
IN JAPAN, DEATH IS SEEN AS A FAILURE TO RECOVER. AFTER A PATIENT'S DEATH, THERE'S JUST INDIFFERENCE.
ONCE IT'S OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, IT'S OUT OF OUR JURISDIC-TION...EVEN IN THE CASE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.
Heh..
OUR BOY OVER THERE MAY LOOK PRETTY QUIET AND UNASSUMING, BUT...
?
AFTER EMBALMING, CORPSES ARE NOT A DANGER.
AND MORE THAN ANYTHING, IT HELPS THE FAMILY TO SEE THEIR LOVED ONE'S FACE SO PEACEFUL... IT HELPS ME, TOO.

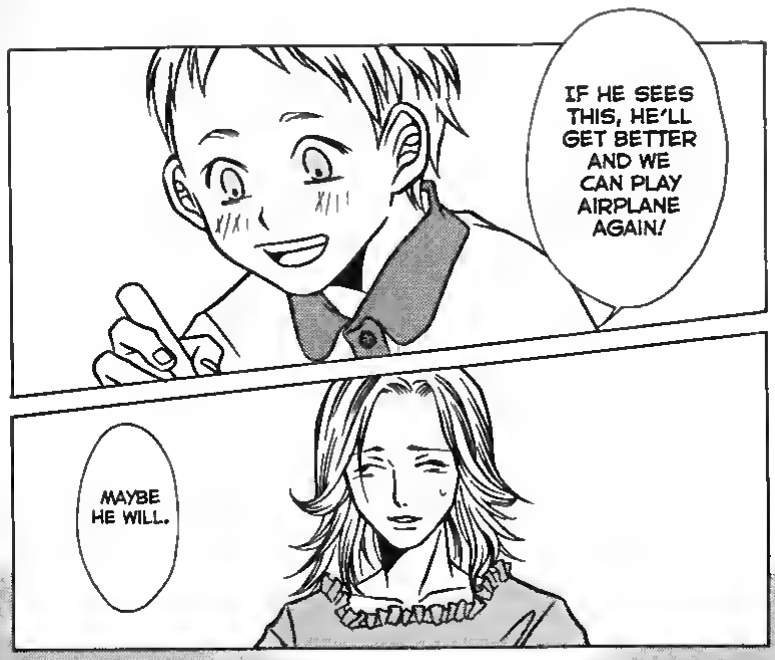

AH...
MMM...
OH GOD...
YOU BAD BOY, SHIN! WE CAN'T DO THIS HERE!
MMM...
OOH...
OH...
OHOOH...

SHIN-
WHAT'S WITH THE...
...COLD SHOULDER?!
And what's with the new hairdo
OH!

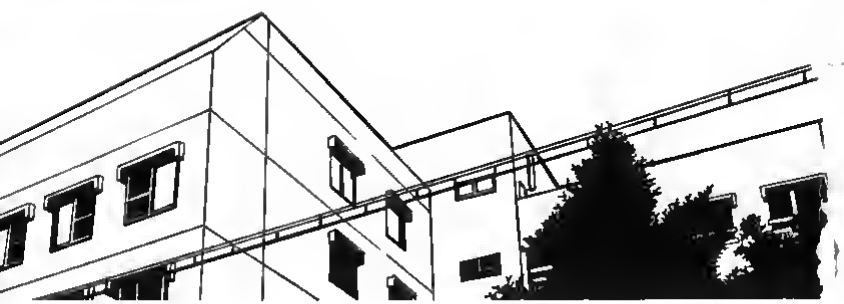
HE'S GETTING WORSE WITH EACH PASSING DAY.
THEY SAID THERE'S A HOLE IN HIS LUNGS. HE'S ON AN AIR TANK RIGHT NOW.
YEAH.
I KNOW. I HAVE TO BE BRAVE, DON'T I? THANKS, MOM.

WARM HANDS, WARM BREATH, WARM SKIN...



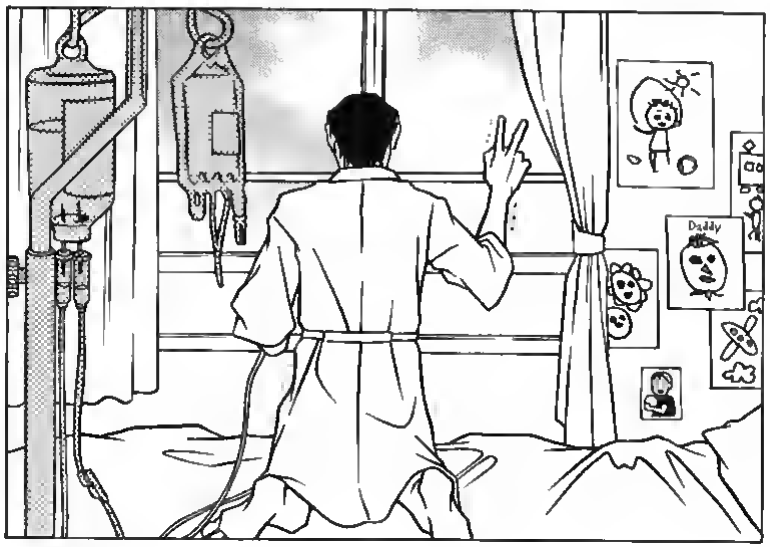


I REALLY WANT A HUG, BUT PAPA'S TRYING HARD TO GET BETTER, SO...

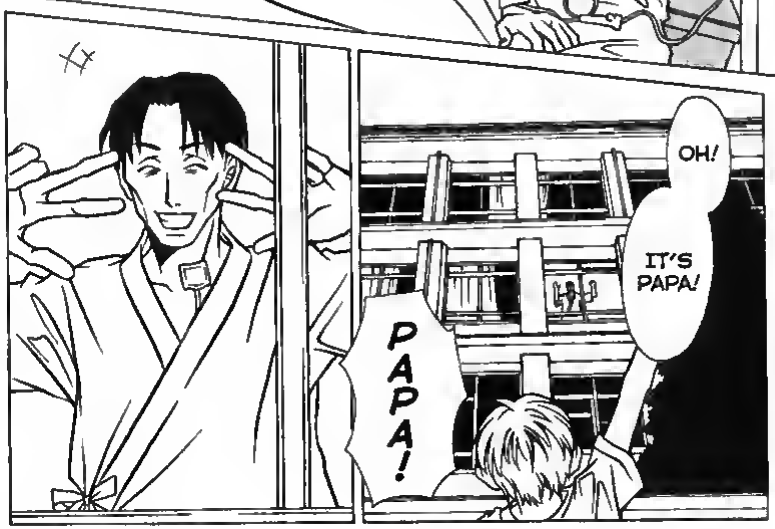


MAMA!
TAKE MY PICTURE TO PAPA, OKAY?
SURE, TAIKI. PAPA SAYS HE ALWAYS FEELS BETTER WHEN HE SEES YOUR PICTURES.
IT'S NOT A SCARF!
THE SCARF LOOKS GOOD, DOESN'T IT? IS THAT PAPA?
HE SAID HE'S INVINCIBLE IN HIS BATTLE SUIT!
IT'S A NECKTIE. PAPA SAID...
...A TIE IS A BUSINESS MAN'S BATTLE SUIT.

HFF...
Huh...


Daddy

EX-EXCUSE ME...
COULD YOU PLEASE... MOVE THE BED?
HFF...

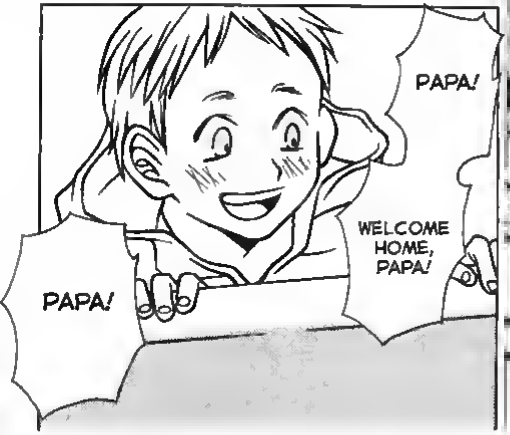

OH!
IT'S PAPA!
PAPA!

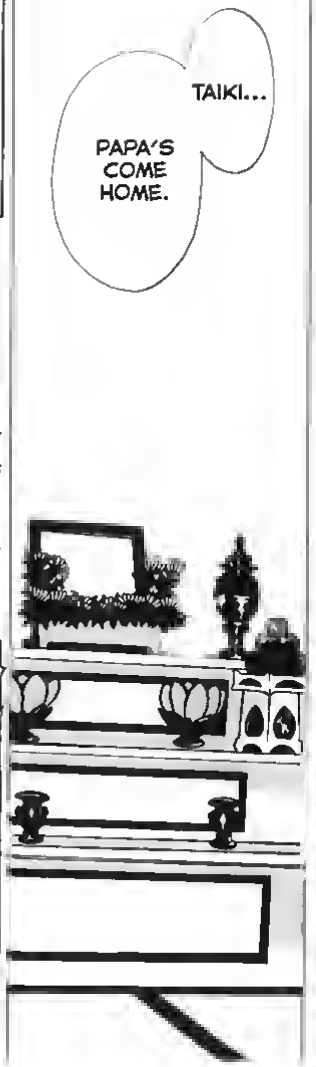
...I CAN'T HUG YOU ANYMORE, SON.
I'M SO SORRY...

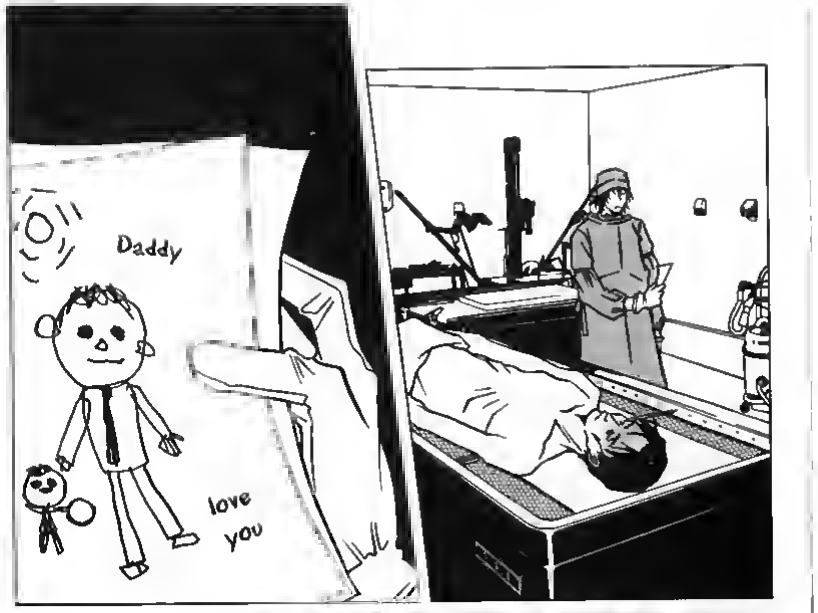
KOYUKI?
IT'S RARE THAT I GET A JOB OFFER DIRECTLY FROM YOU.
I RECOMMENDED THIS TO THE FAMILY BECAUSE THERE'S INFECTIOUS MATERIAL INVOLVED.
WELL, THANKS FOR THE HEADS UP. YOUR MEDICAL CERTIFICATES ARE THOROUGH, BUT...
MAKE IT NICE, SHINJYUROU. THERE'S A CHILD.
GOT IT. IF YOU CAN, GET ME A PICTURE FROM WHEN HE WAS ALIVE.
TALK TO YOU LATER.
WAIT... IT'S THIS KID?! OH NO...
PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS, EH? INFECTIOUS AEROSOLS, THEN.
Need to pay attention to the direction of the air conditioning.
?!
HEY, PLAY AIRPLANE WITH ME!

.....

YOU CAN TOUCH HIM AS MUCH AS YOU WANT NOW.
COME HERE.
REALLY?!


PAPA!
WELCOME HOME, PAPA!
PAPA!


TAIKI...
PAPA'S COME HOME.


Daddy
love you

HE PROBABLY...

...WANTED TO EMBRACE HIS SON MORE THAN ANYTHING.

TO PAPA
TAIKI
UH-HUH...
NO, TAIKI. LOOK.
YOUR FATHER IS GIVING YOU A HUG.

HEY!
PAPA? ARE YOU SLEEPING?
LET'S PLAY AIR-PLANE!
PAPA'S A LIAR!
DID YOU FORGET ABOUT ME?!
TAIKI, PAPA'S TIRED FROM HIS SICKNESS AND HE CAN'T WAKE UP ANYMORE.
HE TRIED REALLY HARD, SO YOU CAN'T BE MAD AT HIM.
YOU'RE LYING! HE'S WEARING HIS BATTLE SUIT!
HE SAID HE WAS INVIN-CIBLE!

THEY WERE VERY HAPPY.
THE THREE OF THEM WERE TOGETHER AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME.
HE DIDN'T LET HIS SON INTO HIS HOSPITAL ROOM. NOT EVEN AT THE END.
HE DIDN'T WANT TO PUT THE CHILD IN ANY DANGER.
SO TO HIM, NOT EMBRACING HIS SON WAS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF HIS LOVE.

THANK YOU.

WHY DON'T YOU GIVE HIM A HUG BACK...
UH-HUH...
...FOR TRYING SO HARD?
UH-HUH...

Ha ha!
AS IF.
THAT'S QUITE A GIRL YOU'VE GOT THERE, MR. EMBALMER.
HERE! I JUST BROUGHT YOU THESE BECAUSE MY MOM TOLD ME TO!
どさっ
GO BACK TO WHATEVER IT WAS YOU'RE DOING. AND GET A ROOM!
SO TO YOU, NOT EMBRACING *HER* IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF YOUR LOVE. ISN'T IT?
Heh heh...

AH, YES... SHINJYUROU'S FAMOUS CONDITION.
I OWE YOU ONE AGAIN, DON'T I?
YEAH, WANNA PAY IT BACK RIGHT NOW?
I HAVE THIS CONDITION.
THERE'S THIS SWELLING THAT I CAN'T SEEM TO GET UNDER CONTROL. THINK YOU COULD HELP ME WITH THAT?
ゴゴゴ
AZUKI... YOU'RE REALLY BECOMING QUITE THE—

Embalming 4
A Love Without Embrace
End

LATELY...
YOU NEED TO EAT A BALANCED MEAL.
...MY LITTLE SISTER HAS BEEN ACTING AWFULLY STRANGE.
AZUKI, YOU DON'T WANT ANY MORE BROTH OR VEGETABLES?
AZUKI!
COMING! COMING!
DING DONG
DING DONG
WELL, I CERTAINLY COULDN'T TELL BY THE WAY YOU DRESS. YOUR REALLY SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE CLOTHES! THAT OUTFIT LOOKS LIKE-
At least call it soup and salad, okay?
OKAY, YOU DO KNOW THAT I'M NOT A KID ANYMORE, DON'T YOU?
MORNING.
Yawn...
I WAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, SO I BROUGHT YOU THE RENT.
SHINJYUROU!
LATELY, HE'S ALL SHE TALKS ABOUT.
SO YOU'RE THAT MAMIYA GUY OR WHATEVER?
Hehheh
SINGO.
YOU'RE ON THE WAY HOME AFTER A NIGHT OUT, RIGHT?

THIS IS THE KIND OF GUY YOU'RE INTO?!
NATSUI!
SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE HANGING AROUND AZUKI A LOT, HUH?
YOUR SISTER'S JUST AT THAT AGE. YOU SHOULD CUT HER SOME SLACK.
Like it or not, she's getting older.
TO ME SHE'S ALWAYS GOING TO BE THE LITTLE GIRL I GREW UP WITH.
SINCE OUR FATHER PASSED AWAY, I'VE BEEN HER ONLY MALE INFLUENCE. I NEED TO BE STRICT.
DEVELOPMENT ROOM 5
NATSUI, A LITTLE MORE XANTHAN GUM, PLEASE.
IT NEEDS TO BE A BIT STICKIER.
YOU GOT IT.
HEY, MAN, I HAVEN'T LAID A FINGER ON HER.
OH, AZUKI...
AND WHO ARE YOU TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO ANYWAY?
DAMMIT, NATSUI! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!
Cut it out!
IF YOU LAY A HAND ON MY LITTLE SISTER, YOU'LL NEVER STOP SCREAMING FROM ALL THE SALT I RUB IN YOUR EYES!
.....

NOTE: In Japan, throwing salt at bad things is believed to make them go away.

NATSUI!
HEY! ARE YOU OKAY?
Look, the story wasn't THAT bad.
?!
I HAVEN'T BEEN FEELING VERY WELL LATELY...
IT'S PROBABLY STRESS. TRY NOT TO WORRY ABOUT YOUR SISTER SO MUCH.
BY THE WAY, THESE BAKED APPLE CHIPS ARE REALLY SOUR.
ADD SOME MORE FRUIT JUICE POWDER AND SUGAR.
NO! IF YOU DO THAT IT GETS TOO SWEET.
YOU STARTED WORKING HERE, AT A CONFECTIONARY COMPANY OF ALL PLACES, FOR HER AS WELL, DIDN'T YOU?
NATSUI, YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO START ACTING LIKE AZUKI'S OLD MAN.
If you don't stop, you'll look like me
LEAVE ME ALONE.
ARE YOU MAKING ANY HEADWAY?
WITH THAT NEW PROJECT? THE SALT-FLAVORED SNACK?
NO...
BUT I'VE GOT THE PERFECT NAME...
THAT'S AWFUL.
We don't going to want to eat that
..."BROTHER'S SWEAT."

I KNOW WHY I DON'T FEEL WELL.
IT'S THAT ENBOOMER, OR WHATEVER HE'S CALLED...
I'M THIRSTY, BUT I DROPPED MY YEN UNDER THE MACHINE.
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
HA HA!
STUPID, HUH?
LET'S SEE...
IF IT'S JUST ONE, THEN...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.
THANKS. BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I OWE YOU A DRINK.
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GET ONE TOGETHER OVER THE WEEKEND?
AZUKI...
TWITCH

OH MAN... IT'S REALLY BAD THIS TIME.
VENDING MACHINE GIRL, PLEASE BE THERE. GOD, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER NAME.
PING PDONG
G-GOOD EVENING. UM... SORRY ABOUT EARLIER...
I THOUGHT YOU COULD USE SOME-THING TO EAT.
THESE ARE ALL TRIAL PRO-DUCTS FROM MY BRO-THER'S WORK, BUT...
UH...
SHFFT
NOT THIS MAN!! NEVER!

AH!
SHINJYU-ROU...
...THAT HURTS!
AH!
AGH!
GO HOME!

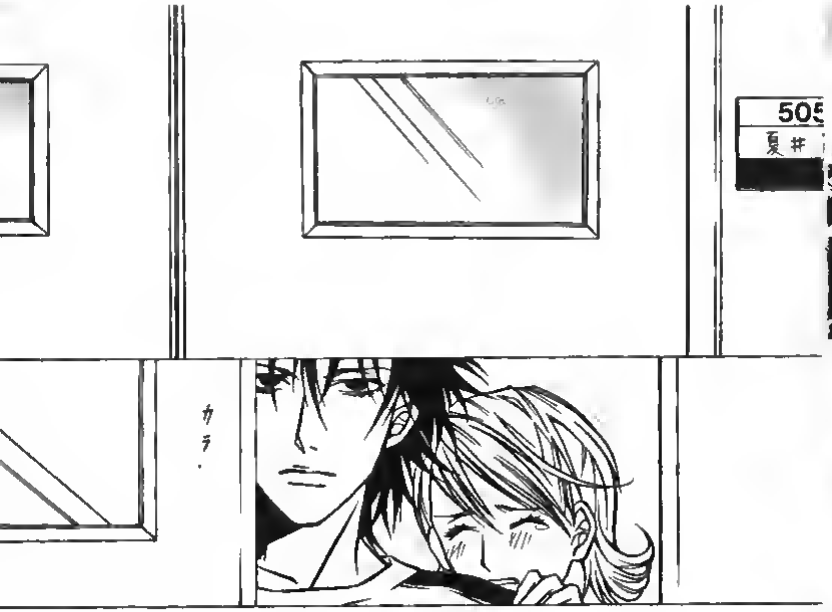
OWW!
NO! WHAT ARE-?! SHINJYU-ROU!

SIGH...
WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT?!
AT THAT GUY'S PLACE AGAIN?
LOOK, I TOLD YOU THERE'S NOTHING GOING ON BETWEEN ME AND SHINJYU-ROU!
OH, DEAR
KARMA, EH?
ばん
たん
Stupid lab coat- it's too big.
And you're more naked than me!
You're acting like my stupid brother!
BUT YOU ALWAYS BRING HOME GIRLS WHO ARE PRAC-TICALLY NAKED!
I DON'T GET IT. WHY IS SHINJYUROU ACTING LIKE SUCH A JERK?
WHAT IS-?!
GO HOME! AND DON'T WALK AROUND MOSTLY NAKED LIKE THAT AT NIGHT!

NATSUI, DADDY WON'T BRING US CANDY ANYMORE.

I DON'T WANT YOU SEEING THAT GUY ANYMORE. HE'S A PICKUP ARTIST.
AND HE'S PRACTICALLY UNEMPLOYED.
BEING AN EMBALMER IS A RESPECT-ABLE JOB.
HE BRINGS PEOPLE PEACE AND DIGNITY— THOSE ARE PRICELESS THINGS!
WHAT'S RESPECT-ABLE ABOUT FIDDLING AROUND WITH A CORPSE?!
THAT'S A HORRIBLE THING TO SAY!
I'LL FIND SOMEONE DECENT FOR YOU—
JUST... DROP DEAD, JERK!

OH, AZUKI... WHEN DID YOU GROW UP?
BE PATIENT. MOM CAN'T COME HOME BECAUSE OF WORK AND–
I WANT CHOCO-LATE!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT. WHEN I GROW UP, I'M GONNA BE A CANDY MAKER AND GIVE YOU LOTS AND LOTS OF CHOCOLATE, AZUKI.
THE CANDY DAD WOULD GIVE US WAS EXTRA SWEET BECAUSE IT WAS A SYMBOL OF HAPPINESS.
WHEN DID YOU STOP ASKING FOR CANDY?
REALLY?
FROM NOW ON, I'LL GIVE THEM TO AZUKI... IN DAD'S PLACE.
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHO IS IT?
.....
SHINJYU-ROU...
MY BROTHER IS...
HE'S...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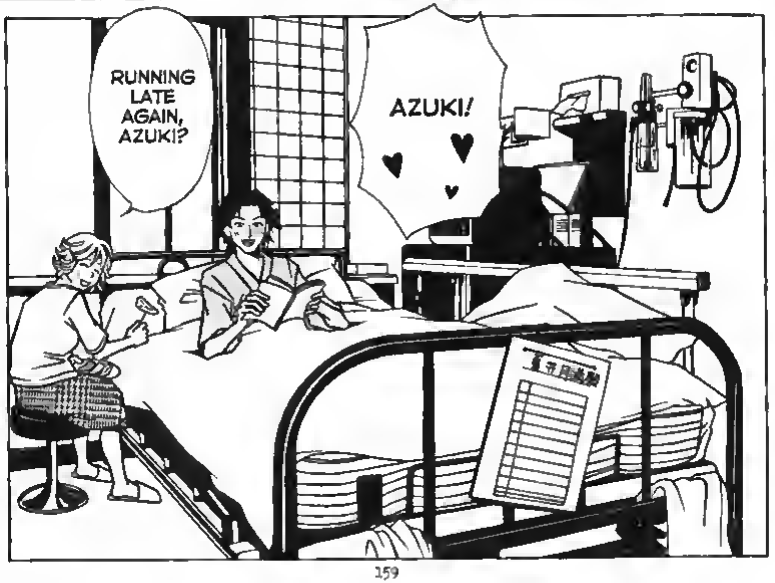
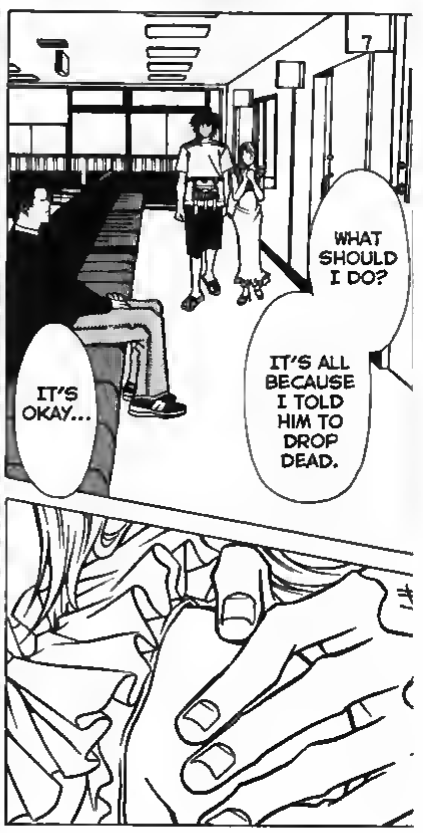
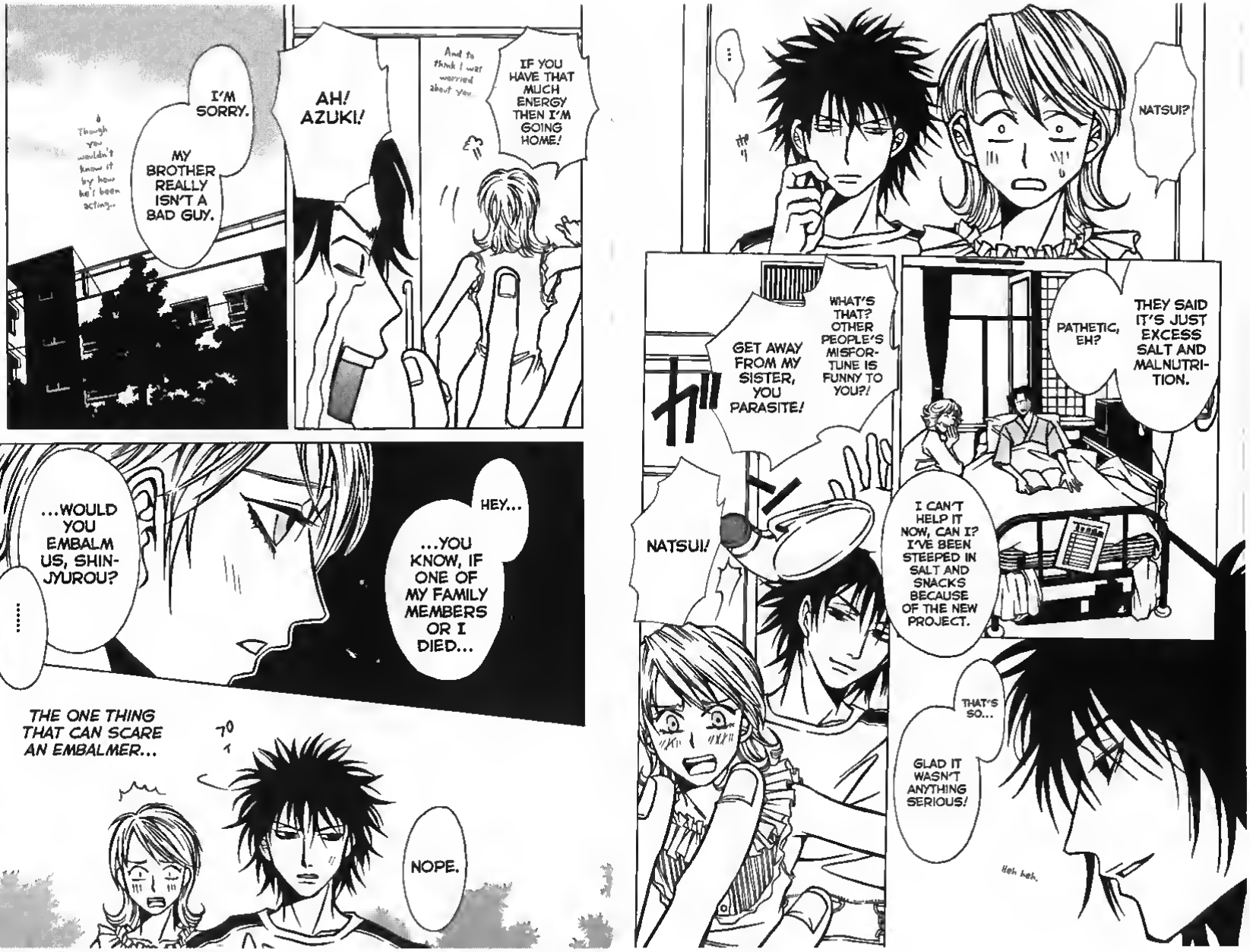
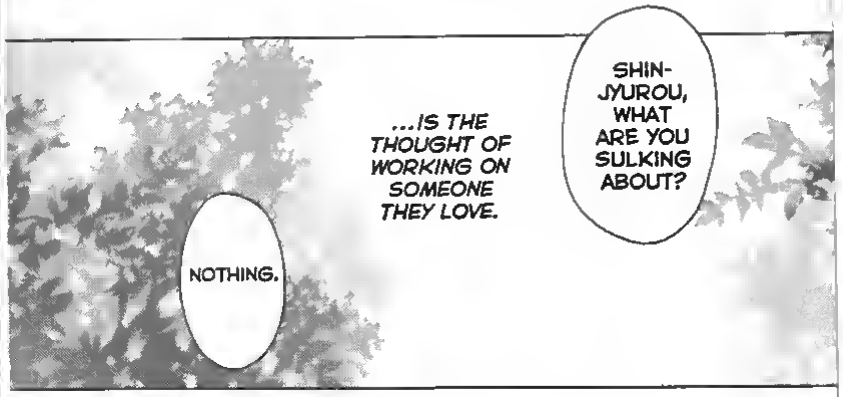

RUNNING LATE AGAIN, AZUKI?
AZUKI!

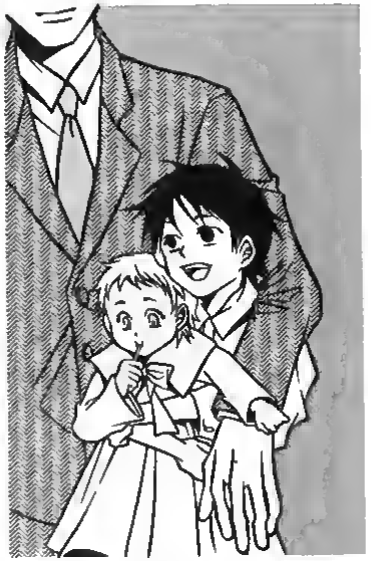
医療法人社団
メディカル会
詳伝病院
SHOUDE
HOSPIT

I'LL BE THERE FOR YOU.

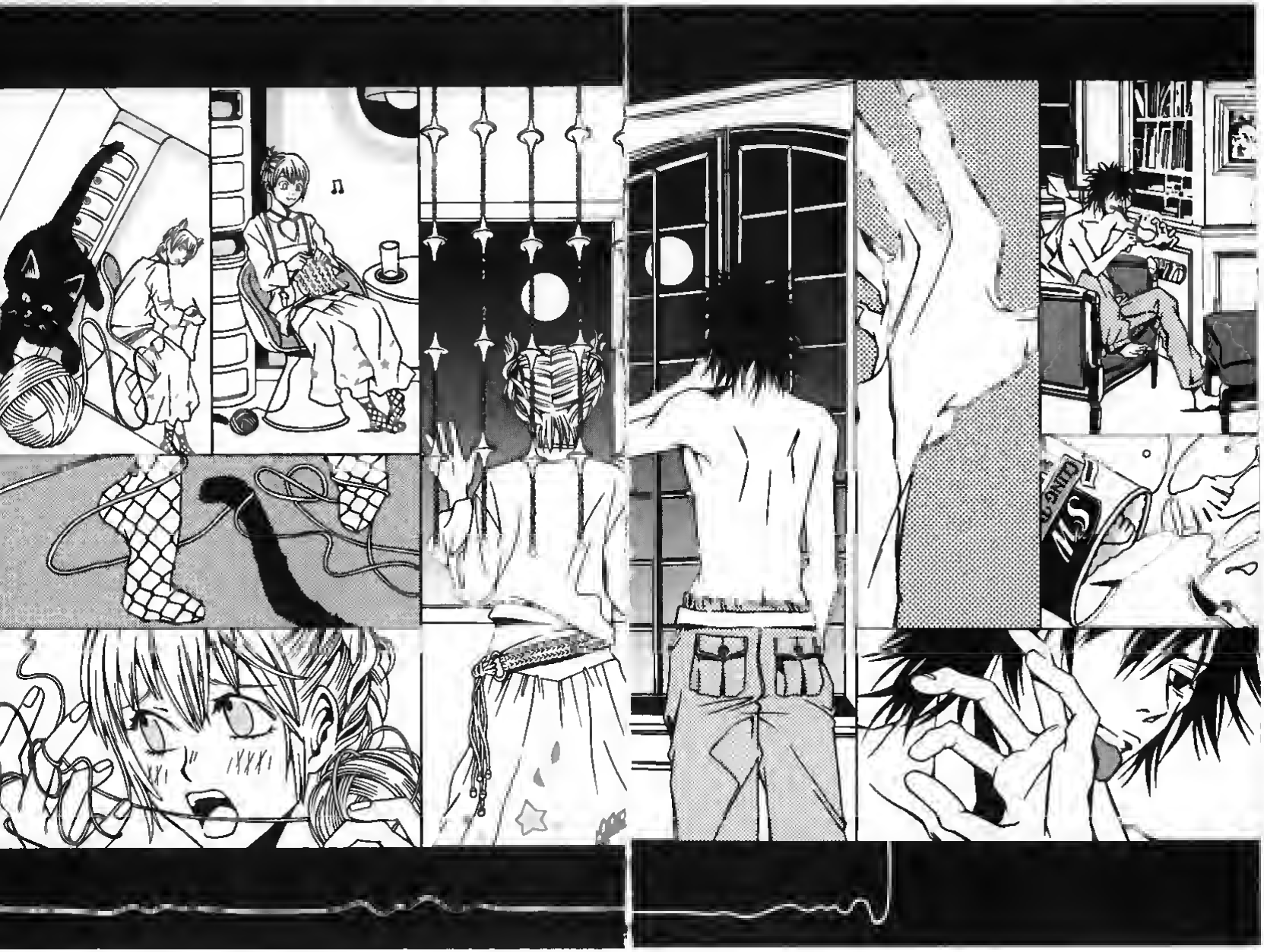

WHAT SHOULD I DO?
IT'S ALL BECAUSE I TOLD HIM TO DROP DEAD.
IT'S OKAY...


I'M SORRY.
MY BROTHER REALLY ISN'T A BAD GUY.
Though you wouldn't know it by how he's been acting...
AH! AZUKI!
IF YOU HAVE THAT MUCH ENERGY THEN I'M GOING HOME!
And to think I was worried about you.
...WOULD YOU EMBALM US, SHINJYUROU?
.....
HEY...
...YOU KNOW, IF ONE OF MY FAMILY MEMBERS OR I DIED...
THE ONE THING THAT CAN SCARE AN EMBALMER...
NOPE.
NATSUI?
GET AWAY FROM MY SISTER, YOU PARASITE!
WHAT'S THAT? OTHER PEOPLE'S MISFORTUNE IS FUNNY TO YOU?!
NATSUI!
PATHETIC, EH?
THEY SAID IT'S JUST EXCESS SALT AND MALNUTRITION.
I CAN'T HELP IT NOW, CAN I? I'VE BEEN STEEPED IN SALT AND SNACKS BECAUSE OF THE NEW PROJECT.
THAT'S SO...
GLAD IT WASN'T ANYTHING SERIOUS!
Heh heh.





Embalming 5
Sweets Memories
End



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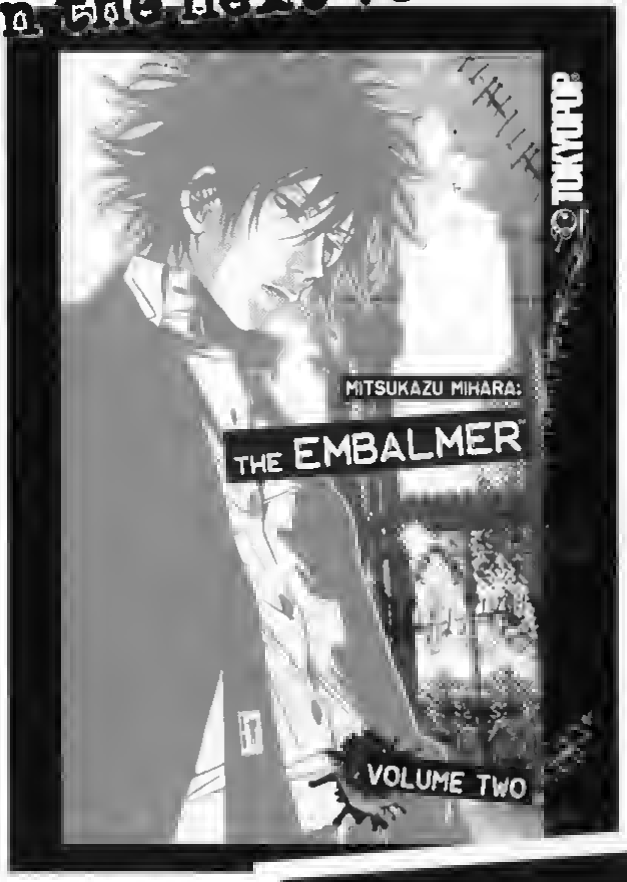

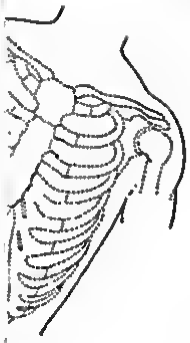

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